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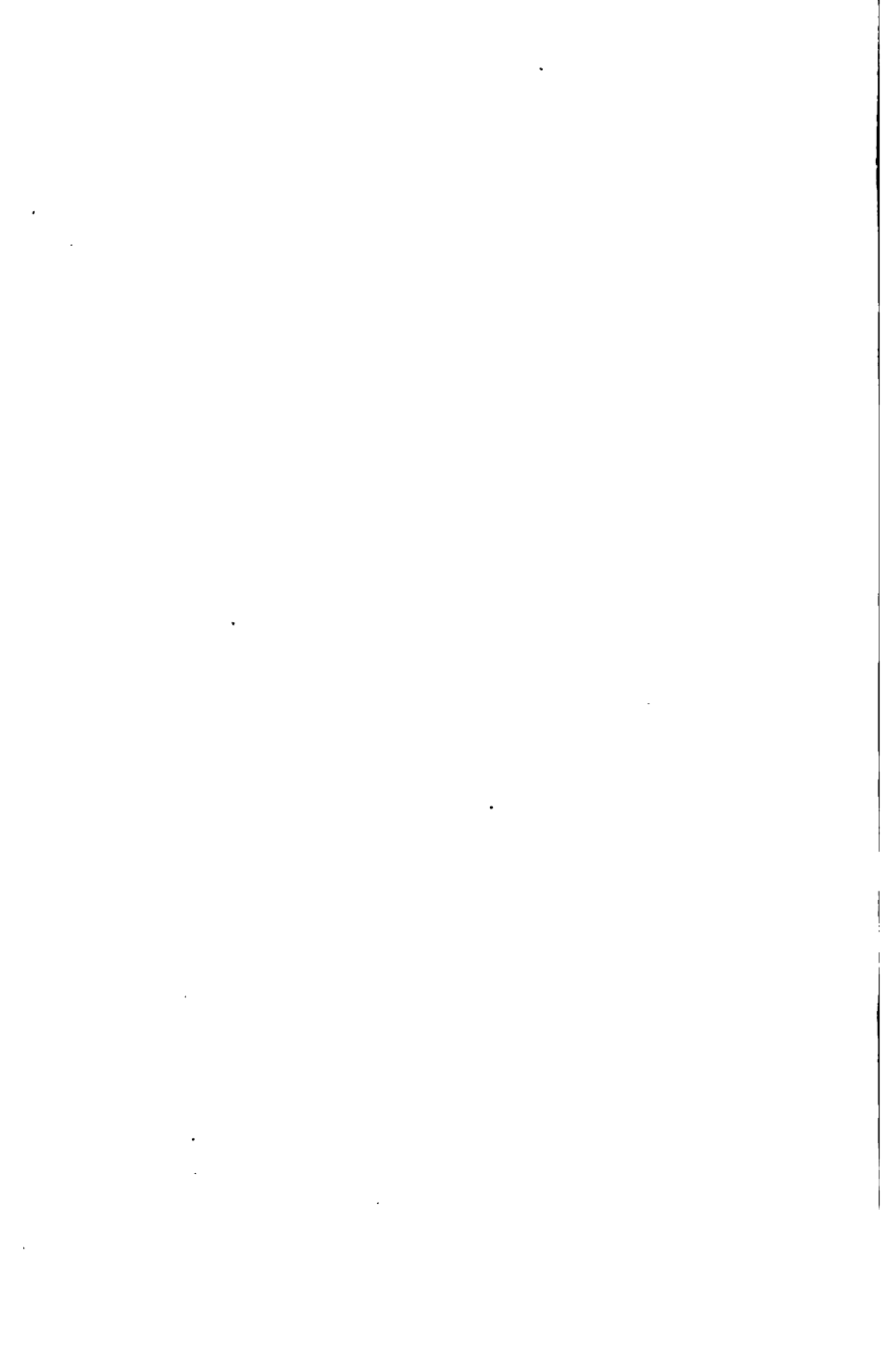
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HAZEL OR
PERILPOINT LIGHTHOUSE





HAZEL; OR, PERILPOINT LIGHTHOUSE.



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SHE SAW SOME ONE MOTIONLESS ACROSS THE PATH.—Page 212.

HAZEL;
OR,
PERILPOINT LIGHTHOUSE.

BY
EMILY GRACE HARDING

AUTHOR OF
"A MOUNTAIN DAISY," "CHATTERTON MAGNA," ETC.

LONDON:
WALTER SCOTT, 24 WARWICK LANE,
PATERNOSTER ROW.
1885.

206. e. 1965





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HAZEL; OR, PERILPOINT LIGHTHOUSE.

CHAPTER I

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy." —*Hamlet.*

PERILPOINT Lighthouse was almost as time-worn and weather-beaten in appearance as the rocky grey promontory upon which it stood, sturdily bidding defiance to wind and weather. Year after year it had stood there, doing its duty bravely; and though the old grey stones had been worn and battered by many a storm and whirlwind, they were strong still in their old age, and showed little signs of yielding to the furious blasts which roared around them from time to time. And night after night the old lighthouse threw out its light cheerfully over the dark waters which surged and moaned round Perilpoint Rocks, and sailors and travellers loved the light better and better, as

they learned from what dangers it saved them. Perilpoint was the name given to a chain of rocks which ran out from the mainland about half-a-mile into the sea ; and it was at the further end of these rocks that the lighthouse stood, to warn passing vessels from approaching too near them. For they shelved down steeply to the water, and rose again here and there in sharp peaks, covered at high tide, and very dangerous ; and more than once a ship had struck on them and gone down, when, through carelessness, the lighthouse lamps had been neglected. Where the promontory joined the mainland, the rocks were some hundred feet high, and the descent to the level of the lighthouse was by a rough, stony path, bordered near the summit by a rude kind of brushwood. To the dwellers in the lighthouse, however, this pathway seemed easy enough ; but their more frequent mode of reaching the town of Pointhaven was by crossing the little bay which lay between Perilpoint and the Pointhaven beach. The bay was calm and quiet : it was on the opposite side of the rocks, and at their extreme end, that the water was always seething and foaming over the hidden, or partially hidden, peaks, with their seaweed crowns. Pointhaven was a moderate-sized town, and a busy one, for a large fishing trade was carried on by the inhabitants, and the beach was studded here and there with fishermen's huts. It was not a fashionable watering-place, but it had attractions of its own, not the least of which was its picturesque scenery, which drew to it a good many visitors—artists among them—during the summer months. Its rocks and its sands were delightful play-places for children ; and the town boasted the attraction of affording quarters for the Militia at certain seasons in the year, at which times it was gay enough to please the most pleasure loving of the young neighbouring people, who at other times were fond of pronouncing it a “slow old place, with nothing but fish to be seen.” But then they did not look at the

yellow sands and the picturesque costumes of the fishwives, nor at the grey and brown rocks, with their bright dresses of lichen and seaweed, nor at the shining blue water in the bay, and the dark waves with their white foam-crests out beyond. And they did not listen to the soft flapping of the seagulls' wings, as they skimmed over the surface of the water, nor to the surging of those black waves which dashed against the rocks at Perilpoint, nor to the gentler rippling of their smaller sister-waves upon the beach. For at Pointhaven, as at all other places, however beautiful, there were many who cared for none of these things, while to others these sights and sounds of God's creation were like perpetual pictures and perpetual music. One of those who most loved them was Hazel, the lighthouse-keeper's daughter. She was sixteen years of age; a striking-looking girl, with a slender, graceful figure, and an expressive and interesting face—a face which people generally looked at twice as they passed her, and which excited some wonder in their minds. Her rippling chestnut-brown hair, loosely knotted, and her dark, wistful eyes—for which, perhaps, her name had been given her—were the envy of the Pointhaven maidens, both of high and low degree. And it was for her beauty, as well as for a certain exclusiveness and reserve of character, that girls of her own station called her “proud,” and “stuck-up,” and a good many other hard things, which Hazel did not hear in her lighthouse home; or of which, if she did hear, she took no notice.

She stood at the far end of the Perilpoint rocks one windy October day, watching the gathering clouds and the uneasy swelling of the waves, with both interest and anxiety—anxiety, because her father was expected home that night from a fishing expedition, on which he had been absent three days, and she knew well what those signs in the clouds and in the water indicated. Hazel had often stood on the rocks and watched a storm come up, and she

had grown almost as weather-wise as her father himself. She thoroughly enjoyed the rough wind and the excitement of the coming storm, and liked to stay out till the last moment—till the rain came down in torrents, or till the wind grew too strong for her to keep a safe footing any longer. It was growing strong now—stronger every minute, and the waves were getting more and more impatient, dashing themselves against the rocks, as if enraged against that strong, restraining barrier. Already the sharp, dangerous peaks were covered, hiding themselves, ready to entrap any unwary vessel, and the water rose gradually round the higher point where Hazel stood. But she knew just how far it rose on the stormiest day, and was quite safe; and the colour rose in her face, and her eyes shone with excitement as she looked out over the water, and watched the fishing-boats tossing up and down like india-rubber balls in the bay. "It is splendid!" she said to herself, "only I wish father would come home! I am glad he knows so well how to manage his boat. There will be all the fish to pack away to-night; how disagreeable it will be! I wonder why I hate the work so much? Other girls don't, and mother doesn't. I wonder why——" Hazel went off into a reverie so deep that she did not notice the little boat for which she was looking, just a speck in the far distance, making its way slowly over the noisy waves.

Hazel's life, as far back as she could remember, had been a puzzle to her. When she was a little child she had not felt like other children; she had shrunk from the little, rough, dirty boys and girls, who tumbled about all day long on the beach, by the fishermen's huts, and her life had been a lonely one. She had not cared to play with them, and had liked better to play her own games, aloof from them all, and to think her own thoughts, which they were not able to share. And as she grew older she began to wonder *why* she could not play with the dirty little

children, and *why* there should be that difference between herself and them, which she felt there was, and could not explain. The fishwives, too, frightened her by their loud, coarse voices, and by the rough, and sometimes bad words they said to each other and to the children. Hazel had often wondered, in her childish way, why they liked to be so rude and noisy, and to live, many of them, in such dirty cottages, and why they did not wash their children's faces oftener. For she was very fastidious herself in every respect, and her mother had found her several times wrapped in a shawl washing out her little frocks in the clear pools on the rocks when she had accidentally soiled them more than usual, because she knew that she must not ask for a clean one till Sunday!

Another thing which had distressed her all her life was, that she could not get people to answer questions. She seemed to have spent her childish years in asking questions, which nobody could or would answer. *Why* things were as they were, and *how* they had become so, were her two great troubles—troubles, because she was sure that *some* people knew, and she wanted to know too, and could not find out. She asked her father and mother, but they did not seem to care to find out, and only laughed at her questions. Her father could tell her plenty of stories of foreign lands, for he had been a sailor, and had travelled to many far-off countries; but he could not satisfy her curiosity about the wonderful things which he could tell her of as facts; and, worse than that, he could not even see why she should want to know more about them. Still less could her mother see it, for she had not travelled, and her little world of scrubbing and cleaning, and making and mending, with an occasional chat with a neighbour, was enough for her. So Hazel had for the last two or three years ceased to ask them questions, and had tried to find out for herself all she could, by getting hold of books—old books, bought at a

second-hand shop in Pointhaven, with saved-up pennies and halfpennies, which her father and mother gave her when they had some to spare. They were very good to her, and Hazel loved them dearly; but it was a disappointment to her that they could not sympathise with her. She was a puzzle to them, as she was indeed to herself, and her life was a lonely one for a young girl.

Still it was not unhappy—or not altogether so; for Hazel loved the old lighthouse and the rocks and water more than she could tell to anybody; and besides this, she enjoyed perfect freedom to go exactly where she pleased, and had been accustomed to row herself across the bay to Pointhaven beach when she liked, ever since she had been strong enough to hold the oars. And when quite a child her great amusement had been to peep in at the windows of gentlemen's houses in the town, especially in the twilight, when the rooms were bright with firelight, and to watch that different life within, which seemed to her so much more beautiful and attractive than that in the fishing-huts on the beach. She did not envy the pretty dresses of the children who played in those warm, brightly-lighted rooms, nor yet the good things which she sometimes saw ready for them on the tea-table; and yet she always turned away with a feeling of regret and longing, which she could not explain, nor quite understand.

Sometimes, while she peeped through the half-drawn blinds, she saw someone at the piano, and heard music and singing, and she stood listening till the tears ran down her cheeks, and she was obliged to turn away because it was getting so dark and cold—wondering why she need love that beautiful music so much, if *she* might not have any of it. Sometimes she had stayed so long that her father had come to fetch her, and had taken her home sobbing on his shoulder with a grief he was at a loss to comprehend. Only she was a “strange child,” he said, and always had

been, from the time when he had come home from his last long voyage, and had wondered at, and rejoiced over, the beauty and grace of his little two-year-old daughter, born shortly after he had left his home, and the first child he had ever had to live. For he and his wife had known a great deal of sorrow in their younger days. Four young infants had been one by one laid in the churchyard, so it was not to be wondered at that the lighthouse-keeper had spoilt his last little daughter, and allowed her to have her own way, till she had grown as "proud and wilful"—so the neighbours said—"as a duchess."

Whether she deserved these hard names we shall see; but we must now return to Perilpoint, where we left her standing, lost in thought, in the midst of the gathering storm. The increasing darkness recalled her to herself, and she remembered that the lighthouse lamps ought to be lighted without delay. So with a last look at the lowering sky, she turned and ran home as quickly as the blustering wind would let her. Her mother met her at the door—a strong, active-looking woman, clean and tidy in her dress, like her daughter, but in every other respect totally *unlike* her. There was a motherliness and thrift in her good-humoured face, and strength in her tall and stout figure, but there was no refinement in either, as there was in every play of Hazel's expressive features, and in her every movement.

"Why, lass, you're late!" she said; "didst see your father coming? Here's supper will be spoilt if he don't soon come, and I took such pains, too, to make it a good one! Here, light the lamps, and come and warm you by the fire; you're cold, ain't you?"

"Rather, mother," answered Hazel. "It's going to be a wild night, but I think father will soon be in. I'll light up the first thing; I forgot how dark it was getting."

Hazel mounted the steep stairs and lit the lamps, which

shone out one by one over the dark water, like bright eyes, to see for travellers, when they could no longer see for themselves. Then she looked out at the pretty reflected light in the water, and as she did so, caught sight of her father's boat, slowly and painfully making its way to land. It had passed safely outside the dangerous peaks, and would soon make its way round to the sheltered cove in Perilpoint Bay.

"Poor father! how wet he will be!" said Hazel to herself. "How pretty the light looks in the sea this dark night! I like to see it get brighter and brighter, as each lamp is lighted. Father's in the bay now; I wonder if he has caught much fish?"

"Hazel! Hazel!" called her mother from below, "come down, child, and mind the supper, while I run to the Cove and help my man to bring up the fish. What art dreaming of, lass, up there so long?"

"I was looking at the sea, mother," said Hazel, apologetically; "the lights make it look so pretty."

"Ay, most nights, I suppose," said Mrs. Manlinson, unsympathisingly, though she did not mean to be unkind; "t'aint different to-night from other nights, eh? An' the times you've looked at it, I should think you'd be tired!"

Hazel made no answer, but her bright face grew sober, and she sighed, as she sat down by the fire to watch the saucepans, while her mother, wrapping herself in an old bonnet and shawl, took a lantern and went out into the dark night to meet her husband. A quarter of an hour later they came in together, bearing between them an immense basket of fish, which they deposited in an outer kitchen before Manlinson gave his daughter his always affectionate greeting.

"Why, lass, you're grown handsomer than ever!" he said, as he drew a chair to the warm blaze, and took her slender fingers in his own strong, horny ones. "Been lookin' at



the storm, have ye? Why, you've been an' lighted up your own cheeks as well as the lamps; hasn't she, wife?"

Mrs. Manlinson laughed, and Hazel answered—

"I watched the storm come up, father; it was splendid! Only I wanted you to come home. I hope there won't be shipwrecks to-night, father?" And a sudden pallor came over the girl's face for a moment.

"Tain't so bad by half as many a night I've known," said Manlinson. "When I was in the Atlantic, Hazel, on board the——"

But here his wife, knowing that a long yarn was coming, and fearing for her carefully cooked supper, interrupted, and bade them come to the table, remarking, that "for her part she thought there was storming enough at home to-night, without any of your Atlantics."

Manlinson was hungry, and obeyed very readily, and as soon as the meal was over, he and his wife busied themselves in sorting the fish ready for sale, while Hazel, to her relief, was told by her mother to put up the tea-things, an employment which suited her better than the cold slippery fish, for she had a special aversion to this job, and her mother knew it. She was a kind-hearted woman, and though she laughed at her daughter's "squeamishness," she spared her from a great deal of work that was disagreeable, by setting her to other tasks. For herself, she cared little what she did; all things came alike to her, and she and her husband worked with a will, till all was ready for the early morning market. Hazel, when her own duties were done, and she had made up a cheerful fire for her father and mother, wrapped a shawl over her head, and ran out to watch the storm. It was passing over now; the wind had sunk to a moaning whisper, and the rain had ceased, leaving the rocks all glistening with drops, lighted up by the red light from the lamps, like beautiful jewels. The clouds were rolling away gradually, and a few stars were visible.

.

Hazel thought of the time when she was a little child, and used to sit on the rocks every evening to see which lamps would be lighted first—the lamps in the sky or those in the lighthouse. And she remembered how she used to clap her hands in triumph when the sky lamps won the race, and shone out one by one, and how she used to wonder *how* they were lighted, and whether the angels had matches to light them with. She remembered asking her mother that question, and Mrs. Manlinson's shocked answer, "Fie, child! don't ye know better than *that*? What'll ye think next, silly bairn!" But then that was *not* an answer after all, and poor Hazel did not dare ask again—till she knelt down at her little bedside, after her mother had bid her good-night, and asked God if *He* would tell her how His lamps were lighted. A childish prayer—but she *had* learnt something about them not long afterwards, and she always believed it was because she had asked God about it.

In walking through Pointhaven one afternoon with her father, when she was about nine years old, a large bill in a shop-window had attracted her attention. It was the announcement of an astronomical lecture for children, to be given that evening by the Rector of St. Philip's, the parish church of Pointhaven. "What does that long word mean, father?" asked Hazel; "is it something nice?" Her father could not exactly explain, but believed it had something to do with the stars. The child became excited immediately. "My sky-lamps!" she cried; "I asked God to tell me. Oh, father, let us go! I have wanted to know about the stars since I was ever so little!" And Manlinson, content to please his little daughter in that as in most of her requests, took her to the lecture. It was given in terms plain enough for her to understand a great deal, though not all, that was said, and her mind was filled with wonder. She had never dreamed of *such* an explanation of her "lamps," and she was disappointed at first to find that

all her dreams had been only fancies — nothing more. However, as she grew older the disappointment wore off, and she thought that, after all, the stars were much more wonderful than they had ever been in her childish idea of them, and her great desire then was to know *more*. So she saved up her pennies till she had enough to buy a little book—only a little, simple one—about astronomy, and this book was one of her greatest treasures, read and re-read until it was falling to pieces from old age. She felt that there was yet much more to learn, but who was to teach her? She could not understand *all* she read, and there was no one to explain; and if she saved more money to buy bigger books, they might be too hard for her to understand at all. As she stood on the rocks that October night, thinking over these past experiences, she felt that the world was full of mysteries—and who had the key? or how could *she* get the key and unlock them?—she, the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, who might only *peep through the windows* of those bright houses, where there were pictures, and music, and happy people talking—perhaps about the very things she wanted to know—and rows of beautiful books on the walls, only waiting to be read. Hazel pressed her fingers over her brow, and wondered if she would always feel as she did now—a puzzle to herself—with no one near her to help her to unravel the puzzle. No one but God—and it seemed so hard to be patient and wait His time.





CHAPTER II.

"Who's there besides foul weather !
One minded like the weather, most unquietly."

—*King Lear.*

WHILE the lighthouse-keeper's daughter stood alone on the rocks, puzzling over perplexing thoughts, and at the same time enjoying thoroughly the stormy scene around her, a young girl, about two years her senior, sat in a luxuriously furnished little chamber, over a bright fire, starting when the wind whistled a little louder than usual in the chimney, and rejoicing that the worst of the storm was certainly over. She had drawn her easy-chair close to the fender, on which her feet comfortably rested ; and with a book on her lap, and candles on the small table at her side, seemed to be furnished with all that was requisite for the beguilement of a stormy evening. Yet there was an anxious expression on her fair face, and her blue eyes rested on the fire instead of on her book, and the firelight showed tears in them. She was a pretty, delicate-looking girl, with a very white, clear complexion, soft blue eyes, and golden hair, which hung carelessly in short thick curls on her neck ; it refused to grow in any other way ; and she wore it still in her childish fashion. In her white dress, with its green ribbons, and in her fair beauty, she looked very much like her

name—"Waterlily"—given her long ago by her only brother.

I said her apartment was luxurious, but it was after a simple fashion. Pretty curtains and well-chosen furniture, plenty of books, and pictures, and illuminated texts on the walls, lighted up by the fire and candle-light, gave the room an air of luxury, while there was no extravagance in any of its comforts. It was a small room too, but Lilian Thursfield preferred it to any other in the house, because it was in a turret, approached by a narrow staircase, which cut it off from the other rooms, and gave it both privacy and romantic interest in the eyes of its young occupant.

Pointhaven Tower was a very old house, full of odd corners and passages, and little flights of stairs and wide cupboards. It stood on high ground, half-a-mile from the town, in the opposite direction to Perilpoint, and was approached by a long hilly avenue of tall trees and brushwood. There was a good-sized garden, part of which, surrounded by a wall, just below the turret, had become so overgrown with weeds in the time of the former occupants of the Tower that the present possessors had not attempted to bring it into order. It was a small piece only, and was avoided by the servants, who had an idea that it was haunted; and they wondered at Miss Lilian for liking to sleep just above such a dismal-looking place—especially as there was a staircase in the turret-wall, leading straight down from her room into this very wilderness, called by Lilian the "Jungle," and outside the "Jungle" a narrow, lonely, unfrequented road, leading right away down the cliffs to the seashore—just the very road for robbers to come up by, for a midnight attack upon the Tower! Lilian, however, though of a timid disposition naturally, had no fear of either ghosts or robbers; and as she kept the key of the staircase door always on *her* side—which key served to

unlock the lower door also—she felt quite safe. Nevertheless, she was rather startled, when, as she sat looking into the fire, a sudden noise against the window struck her ear—a noise like a handful of sand thrown against the panes. She listened till the sound was repeated; then going hastily to the window, opened it, and looked out. It was not yet quite dark, and she saw some one standing in the old garden, just beneath the window.

“Who’s there?” she asked in her bravest tones, for she had some idea who her late visitor might be. “What is the matter?”

“I am here,” was the answer, in a well-known voice, which sent a throb of joy and relief through Lilian’s frame. “Can you let me in? Is the coast clear?”

“Oh, Arthur, I am so glad!” whispered Lilian. “Yes, wait a minute; I’ll let you in.” And taking a candle in her hand, she unlocked the staircase door, and carefully descended the steep winding steps, looking very dim and ghostly by the light of a solitary candle.

She was glad when she reached the bottom, and her heart beat as she put the key into the lock of the outer door and found that it would not at first yield to her efforts to turn it. However, she succeeded at last, by using all her force, and admitted a young man, about two years older than herself, to whom she clung passionately, exclaiming—

“Oh, Arthur, I was just longing for you! I have been so dull this evening, and I am always dull now you are kept away like this! Come up into my room; I have a nice little fire, and you can dry yourself. Your coat is quite wet.”

“This looks comfortable!” said the young man, as he followed Lilian into her cosy apartment, and was pushed by her into the easy-chair without ceremony. “It’s no joke walking along the cliff to-night, Lilian! The wind is going down now, but it has been tremendous.”

As the firelight fell upon him, a bystander would have recognised him at once as Lilian's brother. He had the same delicately-formed features and paleness of complexion, and all Lilian's sweetness of expression, mingled with plenty of strength and manliness. His hair was darker than hers—brown, but dashed with what he laughingly called her own "gold-dust," and thick and wavy, and his eyes had in their blue depth a deeper, greyer shade than Lilian's. They were beautiful eyes, and they were lighted up with pleasure as he looked down at the "Waterlily," who had seated herself in great contentment on a stool at his feet, having first taken the precaution to lock the door.

"You frightened me so just for a minute!" she said. "The wind had been whistling in the chimney so dismally, that I had grown quite creepy, and I couldn't think who was coming to attack me! But oh, I am so glad to see you, Arthur!"

"I was afraid I should startle you," he said; "but I saw the light in the window, so I felt sure you were here. But why are you spending the evening up here alone? Where are the aunts?"

"They are downstairs," said Lilian. "They have been with me a good while this evening. I am shut up here because I have had a bad cold, but I think I shall go down to-morrow—if Aunt Winifred will let me," she added, with a smile.

"Aunt Winifred is good to you, isn't she?" asked her brother, anxiously. "Does she tyrannise awfully over you?"

"No, she is good to me," answered Lilian; "she is strict about some things, and I am often dreadfully provoked with her, but she is kind. Only, Arthur," she continued, vehemently, "of course I can't love her as I would do if she cared for you."

"She *does* care for me, I believe," said Arthur, "in spite

of all she says. But you see I have offended her, and am in fact a *standing* offence, and I suppose she won't get over it. So never mind, little sister. You and I are agreed, are we not? And sorry as I am to stand out against poor Aunt Winifred, I don't mean to give in till I have done what I think is my duty."

"No, never!" exclaimed Lilian, with flashing eyes. "Arthur, you are very good and noble, and Aunt Evelyn thinks so. I believe Aunt Winifred does too, in her heart, only she is too proud to acknowledge it. I wish I could work, too; but indeed I do *save* all I can. Sometimes I quite hate this pretty room and all my comforts, when I think of you in your little bare lodgings, and of *him* too!"

Lilian burst into tears, and her brother looked very much troubled.

"Don't cry, Waterlily," he said, stroking her golden head, soothingly. "I don't know that he wants so much pity after all. I was with him for an hour yesterday, and he looked as happy and jolly as possible. He said he had all he wanted, except some more cigars, and that it wasn't half a bad place when you got used to it. And he begged us not to trouble ourselves about him, and to assure the aunts that he was most comfortable. Lily, for a few minutes I felt inclined to throw it all up, and leave him to his 'comfort,' when he talked so. It seems so hard that *we* should have the work to do, and the shame to bear, and he—I think he has no feeling of shame, Lilian."

"It seems not," said Lilian, sadly; "but, dear Arthur, we *must* go on and help him. If we could set him free again, who knows but it might help him to become quite different? It is very hard for you to work as you do, and get no thanks for it, but it is our duty to help him; you do feel quite sure of that?"

"Yes," answered Arthur, decidedly, "and I am going on to do so. It is only sometimes that I feel like that,

when I see him, and talk to him, and he doesn't seem to care."

The young man's voice broke, and he sat silent, shading his eyes with his hand. Lilian held his other hand in hers, and stroked it caressingly.

"You haven't told me yet what has brought you here this stormy night?" she said, after a few minutes' pause. "Was it only to see me?"

"Only to see you that I came to the Tower," he said; "but I came to Pointhaven on business. I like my business, you know, Lily, and I assure you I'm a clever hand at it. They are all beginning to have great respect for 'Gentleman Thursfield.' I quite expect my valuable suggestions to make my fortune."

"Of course they will!" said Lilian. "Why, you have already a wonderful weight of responsibility on your shoulders for a young man of twenty! Isn't it very dark to-night?"

"Rather," answered Arthur; "especially in the 'Jungle.' It is lucky for me that the aunts don't have it cleared out. I might visit you in broad daylight by that route without much fear of being seen. I tore my coat-sleeve, though, climbing over the wall in the dark. Cobble it up for me, will you, Lily, so that I may look respectable to-morrow."

"That's better," said Lilian, surveying her accomplished darn with satisfaction. "Now, Arthur, it is supper-time, and I can hear Aunt Evelyn coming upstairs. Take this candle, and go two steps down the staircase, while I speak to her. That's right. Now I'll shut the door. Mind you don't cough or sneeze."

Arthur retreated as desired, and Lilian, opening her bed-room door, called out—"Aunt Evelyn! isn't it supper-time?"

"Very nearly," answered a soft voice; "are you hungry, dear?"

"*Very!*" answered Lilian. "Haydn once ordered dinner for three, Auntie, when he was very hungry, and ate it all himself. I think I should like supper for two to-night, please."

Her aunt laughed, and came into the room.

"You look very bright and comfortable," she said, "and it is a good sign to have such an appetite; I hope Aunt Winifred will let you come downstairs to-morrow. I will send Jane up with the supper at once."

"For *two*, remember!" said Lilian, laughing, as her aunt went downstairs. "Don't come up yet, Arthur," she whispered, opening the staircase door for a second; "Jane will be up presently."

And very soon Jane appeared, with quite a sumptuous repast. Aunt Evelyn had certainly taken her niece at her word.

"How capitally you managed it," said Arthur, laughing, as he emerged from his hiding-place, and saw the well-spread table. "I confess I'm hungry. Aunt Evelyn is a brick."

"She is a dear, kind old thing," said Lilian. "I believe she would give me anything I asked for—or you either. Suppose I call her up privately to see you? She would be delighted—but no, I think I won't, because if she and Aunt Winifred got talking together about you some day, she might let it out by accident. She forgets to keep secrets sometimes."

"Then we won't let her into ours," said Arthur. "I don't mean to be deprived of *this* way of seeing my sister. I wish Aunt Winifred would come round. It's horribly unkind of her to keep you shut up away from me like this. I declare, if I could only afford it, I'd carry you off by force, and we would set up for ourselves somewhere."

Lilian shook her head. "We can't," she said; "we

must have money, and I can manage to save nice little sums now, without letting her know. I'll give you what I have now, before I forget it," and she took from a drawer a small purse, and emptied its contents into Arthur's hands.

"All that?" he said; "why, Lilian, you must have given me nearly all your quarter's allowance. Don't deny yourself too much, dear. He doesn't deserve it," he added, with a sigh, "though I can't bear to say it."

"I know," said Lilian, sadly, "but he may some day. Take it all, Arthur. Do I look as if I wanted anything?" she added, smiling.

"Yes; a little colour in your cheeks," he answered. "Make haste and get your cold well, Lilian. They won't let you stir out of the house to-morrow, I suppose?"

"No," said Lilian, "I know they won't; it would not be any good to ask. But if it is *very* fine next day, they would let me go out, and I could meet you somewhere. How long shall you be in Pointhaven?"

"About a week, I expect," answered Arthur. "There's a good deal to do. Don't the aunts go to their working-party at St. Philip's Vicarage on Friday afternoon? Walk down with them, if you can, and then on to the church; you'll find me there, and we shall be safe for an hour."

"Capital!" said Lilian; "and if I *don't* come, you must come up here in the evening. Oh, what an appetite Jane will think I have!" she added, laughing, as Arthur declared he must be off, and rose from the table, from which the supper for *two* had certainly disappeared.

"So much the better," laughed Arthur; "they will all pronounce you convalescent. Now, Lily, good-bye till Friday. Will you have courage to mount this ghostly staircase alone after you have let me out?"

"Yes," answered Lilian, preparing to descend. "What a nice evening we have had! Let me unlock the door.

Oh, how dark it is ; but it is quite fine, and there are stars shining. It will be lighter outside the 'Jungle.' "

She watched while he made his way through the tangled brushes, and clambered over the wall.

"All serene!" he called from the other side. "I'll pay you another visit some day. Good night!"

"Good night!" returned Lilian; and when she had quite lost the sound of his retreating footsteps through the fir plantation which lay outside the "Jungle" wall, she locked the door again, and remounted to her turret-chamber, locking after her the upper door also. She rang the bell for Jane to take away the supper things, and sat down by the fire again, drawing a shawl round her, for she had grown chilly, watching her brother's departure. But her face was much brighter now, and she laughed to herself over her adventure. Besides, it was so pleasant to feel that Arthur was at Pointhaven, and would be there a whole week. It was so long since she had seen him—only once since she had come with her aunts to Pointhaven ten months ago, and that was just after their arrival, when, having received from her a full description of the house—her own turret especially—he had visited her one night on a venture in a similar manner. She was looking so bright when her aunts came to sit a little while with her before going to bed, that she was pronounced well enough to come downstairs next day, and resume her usual mode of life.

Meanwhile, she would have been amused if she had heard a conversation which went on in the kitchen, when Jane entered with her supper-tray.

"Well, to be sure!" cook exclaimed, "Miss Lilian must a' been making up for lost time. I thought I just *would* send up a good supper, as Miss Evelyn ordered—so she might have her choice. But my! I didn't think she was as bonny as that! And there, Jane, you can laugh as you like, but I say the 'Jungle' is haunted, as sure as I sit

here. Maybe you *didn't* hear the rustlin' in them bushes to-night, but *I* did when I was in the pantry. And it wasn't frogs neither, you silly thing."

"What was it, then?" asked Jane, provokingly.

"How should I know?" retorted the cook. "I don't have no doings with ghosts myself. But, I do say, I wouldn't have such a place about me if I was missis. It ain't Christian to encourage such things. I'd dig it up to-morrow, and plant it with turnips, and then we shouldn't hear noises of nights."

"I don't know about that," said the housemaid. "If there *is* ghosts, I don't believe your turnips would frighten 'em away."

"T would look more Christian anyway," answered the cook. "I can't abear the place; and how Miss Lilian can sleep in that turret, and see such a place below every time she looks out of window, I can't fancy."

"Miss Lilian's got more sense than you, cook," said Jane, "and that's the reason. You're enough to scare anybody out of their wits, with your fancies."





CHAPTER III.

"My mind is troubled like a fountain stirr'd,
And I myself see not the bottom of it."

—*Troilus and Cressida.*

HAZEL went out on the rocks the morning after the storm, as soon as her work was over, to search for seaweeds and shells, curious specimens of which she often found after a stormy night—left by the encroaching waves as a legacy to the lighthouse maiden. The tide was low, and the peaks stood out, sharp and shining, in the morning sun, their seaweed robes all dripping with sparkling water. Hazel was a good climber; she had been accustomed to scramble about these rocks ever since she was a tiny child, and she now descended fearlessly to the water's edge, to add some bright specimens to her collection, and jumped from one rock to another in enjoyment in no way diminished by the fact of her being sixteen years old instead of nine or ten. There were such lovely feathery seaweeds on those rocks—red, and pink, and green, and orange—and such shining white shells, with pink and purple linings, in all sorts of beautiful shapes. And there were salmon-coloured sea-anemones, like bunches of fluffy satin, clinging to the peaks; and jelly-fish and all sorts of curious and wonderful sea creatures—pretty little crabs, too, which had often and often pinched Hazel's toes

when she was a little girl, and used to sit for hours together on a rocky stool, splashing her bare feet in the water. The best of the Lighthouse Rocks was, that they were Hazel's own property, where she could think her own thoughts without fear of disturbance. Other people seldom came to such a lonely spot, except an occasional stranger to visit the lighthouse; for it was a good long walk from Pointhaven, up from the town, by a steep road, to the top of the cliff, and then through a tangled fir-copse to the cliff's edge, where part of the rocks broke away, and ran out half-a-mile into the sea, shelving down gradually as they went, with only one narrow pathway to lead to the lighthouse. It was a wild, rough walk, and the Pointhaven nursemaids or elder sisters were told to avoid it with their charges, for fear of accidents.

So Hazel had played alone year after year, and now that she did not care to play any longer, she rambled there alone, after her shells and seaweeds, or sat there with her precious book about the stars, or stood in the twilight to see the lamps lit, and watch the bright red light playing on the waves, and the dark deep shadows which fell at the same time over all the more distant water. She sometimes heard her father and mother speak of the time when they did not live at Perilpoint, but when her father had been at sea for months or even years together, and her mother lived in a little village on the Sussex coast, where her four babies lay buried. But Hazel had no recollection of this time, and all remembrances of past days began and ended with the lighthouse.

She had dreams sometimes—but dreams were foolish things her mother said, and had no meaning, and she was quite sure *she* had dreamed of Polar bears and icebergs quite as often as Hazel had dreamt of palm trees, and black monkeys, and people dressed in white—which dreams, it appeared, always remained vividly impressed on the girl's

fancy. Dreams were, in fact, a pleasant part of Hazel's life, for in them she was sometimes admitted into those bright scenes which she so often envied—where people had plenty of pictures and pianos, and where they talked with gentle, pleasant voices, and with pretty words, and talked not always of fish, and markets, and customers, but of the wonderful things which she longed to understand. Only just when she was on the point of understanding them, the dream was over, and she was only Hazel, the lighthouse girl, again, and the music downstairs was only Mrs. Manlinson rattling the fire-irons as she cleaned the stove.

Hazel had filled her basket, and had just clambered up the rocks again, rejoicing over her treasures, when she heard her name called loudly, and ran to obey the summons. It was her mother, at the lighthouse door, who called as she came nearer—

"Make haste, Hazel, child! Here's Jack, come a' purpose to see you—by the looks of him. Get the lad a bit of lunch, if ye can part with them things a few minutes." And she pointed with a good-natured laugh at Hazel's basket.

"They're pretty things, mother," said Hazel. "You'll see what a pretty ornament for your table I'll make with them. Where's Cousin Jack?"

"In there," said her mother, pointing to the front kitchen; and Hazel went in, wondering why her mother should suppose "by the looks of him," that he had come to see her.

He was a tall, well-built young fellow, in sailor costume—which costume had evidently been got up with great care for his visit to his relations—and with a good-natured, honest face, which brightened at the sight of his cousin. She gave him a warm greeting, but rather shrank from him when he kissed her and told her she had grown a "rare lass;" and poor Jack looked disappointed when she began quite coolly to prepare the early dinner, asking, in the most matter-of-fact way, what he had come for.

"Ain't you glad to see me, Hazel?" he asked. "I came almost a' purpose to see you, that I did, and you'll scarce look at me."

Hazel laughed. "I told you I was glad to see you," she said, "and you know I am, Cousin Jack. You were always good to me, and of course I like you to come and see us. What more do you want?"

Jack looked at her suspiciously. "You're getting too fine for the likes o' me," he said; "that's it, I expect."

Hazel looked hurt, and the tears rose to her eyes.

"I'm not fine," she said; "I don't want to be fine. What do you mean, Jack?"

In truth Jack hardly knew what he did mean. He almost worshipped the ground his cousin trod on, but something in her appearance told him "she was not for the likes of him." It was not in her dress, for that was as simple and plain as that of any girl in her station, and was not "fine" at all, for she wore no tawdry jewellery, or ribbons, or flowers, like the Pointhaven girls, who thought they dressed like their mistresses—and it was not anything *definite* that he could see. She did not put on any airs, or say a proud, scornful word to him—and yet Jack felt afraid of her. He wanted to tell her how beautiful she had grown since his last visit, and he did not dare; and he wanted to jump up and help her with her work as he used to do, but he felt ashamed, and shy, and uncomfortable; and even when she spoke to him, he felt half afraid of answering her, because his voice seemed to have grown suddenly harsh, and rough, and ugly, while hers, he thought, was like music—soft, and sweet, and low. He had not noticed it much before, but it now struck him that Hazel did not speak like the girls he knew, or like her father and mother, but like "gentlefolk"—the words all "like books." This way of speaking seemed to come naturally to her—it was no affectation—and Jack was uncomfortable. He had always

looked up to Hazel; he had played with her sometimes when they were children, and had always treated her with a sort of chivalrous respect, which the fastidious damsel had exacted from him; and he had followed her about, and obeyed her commands, as if he were a big dog and she a little princess, but he had never felt far away from her as he did now. He endeavoured to shake off the feeling of bewilderment which was upon him, by answering the questions she asked in a growling fashion, which made her look at him in surprise.

"I've got a holiday," he said, "that's why I've come. And maybe you'd like to know I've got a new appointment on the *Firefly*, as runs up and down every day between Waterton and Marston's Ferry. 'Tis a very good place, and I ain't ashamed of it."

"Of course not," said Hazel. "Why should any one want you to be ashamed of it, Jack?" she added, gently, laying her hand on his rough one. "Is anything the matter? Has any one vexed you?"

The grimness which had been stealing over Jack's countenance relaxed a little. "No, lass," he said, "not as I knows on. I've got no call to be vexed, unless you're going to throw me overboard."

"You and I were always friends," answered Hazel, simply; "why shouldn't we be friends still?"

Nevertheless she drew her hand away from his as she spoke, and went back to the table to finish her arrangements. Jack's eyes followed her discontentedly. Presently he drew from his pocket a little parcel, saying, "I brought you this from Marston's Ferry, where 'twas made. Maybe you won't care for it, but it's yours anyhow."

"Oh, Jack, I do care for it!" exclaimed Hazel, as she drew from the paper a miniature vessel, exquisitely carved in cork—masts and rigging and all complete, and her own name carved on the side, in ornamental letters.

"It is beautiful," she said. "Did you really get it for me?"

"Yes I did," said Jack; "I'd get you anything you liked, Hazel." And her pleasure in his pretty present restored his good temper entirely, and enabled him to do justice to the dinner which she had prepared for him.

Manlinson surveyed his nephew during the meal with much inward satisfaction. He was a better-looking fellow than any of the young fishermen down on the beach, and he had good prospects, and was steady and quiet; and if he and Hazel could make it up by-and-by, it would be a very good thing for the girl. He didn't want to lose her, but he supposed she would want to get married some day, and anybody could see that Jack thought everything of her. And perhaps she would get over her queer fancies when she was engaged to him; "for her fancies won't bring her no good," thought the lighthouse-keeper. "Such as we don't get no better for thinking about stars and music and such like, and where she gets her notions from I can't think."

But when, after dinner, Hazel brought her basket of treasures and showed them to him, and made him admire them, with eyes all bright with pleasure all the while, he had no heart to scold her for her "fancies," and said to himself, "I'll let her be, poor bairn. They makes *her* look pretty anyway, and they makes her happy, and she's my only one. Maybe we'd best let her do as she likes. She's a good girl to help her mother too; Jack shan't have her yet awhile."

Jack had lost his parents some years ago, and had lived at Waterton, a town some few miles further along the coast, ever since with an enterprising fisherman, who wanted a helper in his business. While his parents lived, they had occupied one of the huts on the Pointhaven beach, and Jack, when not helping his father, had played about with Hazel,

when she would let him. And while living at Waterton, he had paid occasional visits to the lighthouse, where his uncle and aunt always welcomed him warmly, and where Hazel too was glad to see him. She was fond of Jack in a way; he was kind to her, and had often protected her from other children when she was small, and had never laughed at her queer thoughts and fancies, though he had often opened his eyes and mouth wide at them; and Hazel had certainly missed him after his parents' death. But she thought now that she would not care to see Jack so *very* often. She did not know what made him so queer, but he certainly *had* been very queer that morning, and quite unlike himself, and she did not want him to watch her wherever she went, as if she were something to which he had a special right.

Finding that he was going to stay till the evening, and that he had got into a long talk with her father about the latter's fishing expedition and the state of the fish-markets, Hazel slipped out of the house, with a nod to her mother, and ran down the rocks to the cove, where her father's boats were kept; and presently she was rowing herself across the bay to Pointhaven, feeling a delightful sense of freedom.

"Where's she gone?" asked Jack, gruffly, as the door closed, and he looked round to find that Hazel had flown.

"I don't know," answered Mrs. Manlinson; "maybe to Pointhaven. She'll be back before you go. I let her go where she likes, poor lass; 'tis lonely biding here all day."

"She's grown a fine girl since you see her last, hasn't she Jack?" said the lighthouse-keeper, fondly. "She's a good girl too, *though* she has fancies. I don't want to part with my pretty lass yet awhile, Jack."

Jack's sunburnt face flushed a little. "She's grown beautiful," he said, earnestly; "leastways she were always beautiful. But she ain't like most folks," he added, in a puzzled tone. "She never were like other children, and

she ain't no more like *our* folks than I'm like the Duke of Wellington. What have ye done to her, uncle?"

"Nothing, lad," answered Manlinson, laughing; "'tis nature, I suppose. But we can't make the child out; can we, wife?"

Mrs. Manlinson was poking the fire, and her answer was not very intelligible.

"I wouldn't change her, though," added the father; "an' I don't want her to be no different from what she is; only she don't seem made for *our* life somehow, poor girl, and I think it worries her betimes."

Jack sighed, and presently proposed that his uncle should walk over to Marston's Ferry with him before tea—a distance of three or four miles—to see the little vessel on which he had just gained an appointment. The two men accordingly set off, and Mrs. Manlinson, drawing a chair to the fire, sighed heavily two or three times, as she took her knitting from her pocket, and counted her stitches.





CHAPTER IV.

"O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!"

—MILTON.

MEANWHILE, Hazel, having left her boat on the beach, wandered about for a little while, looking for stones and shells, and then hastened towards the town.

"Here comes the 'Duchess'!" whispered two shop-girls to each other, as they strolled in tawdry finery through the street, and passed the lighthouse-keeper's daughter in her simple, neat attire.

Hazel heard the loud whisper, and flushed crimson, but she took no notice, though she winced at the girls' loud laugh as they walked on. The "Duchess" was the name by which Hazel went among girls of her own age in Point-haven. Her exclusiveness, and slight haughtiness of manner, and her disdain of the fine dress and flashy ornaments in which they outvied each other, gave them great offence; but as she took no notice of any of them, they could only revenge themselves by teasing or laughing at her as she walked along the streets.

"Why can't they leave me alone?" she said to herself, angrily. "It isn't my fault if I am not like them. I wish I could never see one of them again! I don't want to hate them, and they make me! I would stay at Perilpoint

always, only I love to look at the books so much in the shop windows, and to listen to the music outside people's houses. Oh, there is that blind gentleman who plays the organ at St. Philip's Church. I wonder what made him blind, and how he can play? He is all alone, and he wants something. Can I help you, sir?" she said, respectfully, as the gentleman groped his way past her, turning his blind eyes anxiously from side to side.

"My boy," said the organist. "I sent him to a shop for me, and he has not returned. I should like to return home if you would guide me. I do not know your voice, young lady."

"I am the lighthouse-keeper's daughter," said Hazel, in a low voice. "I will take you home if you will let me, sir; I know your house. Will your boy come back to you?" she added, looking compassionately at the blind man's patient face, and beautiful, sad eyes—beautiful, though sightless.

"Yes, he will come back," he answered; "but I am tired, and should be glad to get home. Boys are wild, and no doubt he has met with other boys, who have made him forget his old master. Ah, well, it is natural, I suppose!"

But Hazel thought it was very naughty and unkind, and she said so.

"It will be his punishment to find that I have gone home without him," said the organist. "He is fond of his master, but he is thoughtless. What is the name of my conductress?"

"Hazalel Manlinson," she answered. "I am always called Hazel."

"And you live at the lighthouse?" he said. "And who lives with you there?"

"Only my father and mother," said Hazel. "I have no brothers and sisters."

"You are lonely, then," said the blind gentleman.

"No," said Hazel. "Yes, I am, sometimes."

"Lonely and *not* lonely," said her new friend. "I can understand it. So am I. I wonder if you like music? Do you hear music at the lighthouse?"

"The sea makes music," she answered, in a low voice, not quite sure if he would laugh at her. "I hear that music all day long, and at night, and always."

He smiled. "I like that music too," he said. "Everyone does not hear it, but you must know it well, and love it. And do you never hear other music?"

"Not often," said Hazel, sadly. "I hear you play on Sundays, and I hear the band play when the soldiers come, and I hear pianos in the town sometimes."

"How do you hear them?" asked her friend, in an amused voice.

"I listen—at windows," answered Hazel, half under her breath. "Nobody sees me, and I like it so! It isn't any harm, is it?"

"I should not think so," answered the organist, gravely. "Poor child! Then you love music?—You *are* a child, are you not? How old are you?"

"Sixteen," said Hazel; "I was sixteen a little while ago."

"Then you are a child," said the gentleman. "I had a child once—she was sixteen when she died. I could see till then, Hazel, but my child had a bad fever and died, and I had the fever too, and the light died out of my eyes—I could never see again. And I shall never see any more. I am glad my little daughter did not know her poor father would be blind."

"I am so sorry your daughter died," said Hazel, softly. "Isn't it dreadful to be blind?"

"It used to be," he said, "but I am accustomed to it now. I think it would be dreadful still, but for my music."

Hazel looked up at him, and she saw his face brighten

and glow all over. It was a pale, worn face, sometimes sad, and sometimes eager and restless in its expression, but always patient, and there were many lines upon it. And the organist's hair was quite grey; he was getting old, as he said, and it seemed hard, Hazel thought, that he had such a careless boy to look after him. His clothes were shabby too, though he was certainly a gentleman, in spite of them; and when they reached the house where he lodged, in a quiet street, and Hazel led him up the stairs to his parlour, and made up his fire for him, she noticed that it was not a comfortable room. It was poorly furnished, and the carpet was threadbare, and the horsehair couch was worn, and looked very hard and uncomfortable. But there was a little organ in one corner, and the gentleman opened it and began to play. It sounded so sweet, that Hazel forgot the bareness of the room, and listened spell-bound, drawing nearer and nearer as he went on playing, till she could watch minutely the movements of his fingers. She had never stood so near to anyone playing before, and she watched curiously, wondering how the sounds were made, but afraid to ask.

"So you like my organ?" asked the blind man, after a while. "I wonder if you could do something for me?"

"I will do anything I can, sir," said Hazel. "The music is beautiful!"

He smiled. "I want you to write it down for me," he said; "I cannot do it for myself, and I cannot always find someone to do it for me when I want it done. Take this pen and this music-paper——"

Hazel coloured. "I am very sorry, sir," she said, "but I do not know anything about it. I have never learnt to write music."

The organist looked disappointed. "Ah, I forgot," he said; "the tones of your voice made me forget who you were. Are you the lighthouse-keeper's daughter?"

"Yes," answered Hazel, smiling; "I wish I could help you, sir—but I do not know anything!" she added, sadly.

"I do not quite believe that," said her friend, "but you shall learn to help me, if you will. Would you like to learn how to write out music?"

"Oh, yes!" she exclaimed, eagerly. "I have so much time always, I could write a great deal for you if I knew how. And I should like to know so much—and how you make the music too," she added, timidly.

"You must learn something about that first," said the organist. "Give me one of those music-books from that shelf, and tell me what you see on the first page."

Hazel was puzzled to know how to explain the strange black marks, which were to her an unknown language, but she managed to describe them so as to make her teacher understand what she meant.

Half-an-hour passed of delightful study to Hazel, and interesting teaching to the blind organist. He found his pupil intelligent to a degree that surprised him, and her eager thanks when he told her that she had learnt enough for that day were sufficient reward for his pains.

"You may come again at this time, whenever you like," he said, "every day, if you have time—and you shall pay me for my lessons by writing out my music for me as soon as you are able. You will very soon be able to write down what I tell you. You may keep this little book to study from at home, when you like."

"I will try to make the notes at home," said Hazel, joyfully. "I can copy them in the evenings, and I will learn to do them neatly. I am so much obliged to you, sir!"

"I have no little daughter to teach now," said the blind man, sadly. "I knew that you loved music by your voice. What else do you want to know besides music?"

"A great many things," answered Hazel, in a puzzled voice; "but my father and mother say I ought not to want

to know things—that they are not for such as we are. And I cannot understand all that is in books—and I have no one to tell me!”

Hazel burst into tears, and the organist laid his hand on her shoulder, with a puzzled expression on his face.

“You and I will study some of the hard things together,” he said. “I am getting an old man, and time sometimes hangs heavily on my hands. I have not strength to walk as I used to do, and I have few friends to come and see me. You shall write my music for me, and I will explain your books for you. Is it a bargain?”

It was one to which Hazel agreed only too joyfully, and she bade farewell to her kind friend in very bright spirits.

“Poor little girl!” said the blind man to himself, after she had gone. “Will it be bad for her, in her station, to teach her some of the things she longs to learn? I think not, for it is evident that she ought not to be a lighthouse-keeper’s daughter! If I can help to brighten a young life I will gladly do it. And people are so unwilling to write my music for me; it troubles them, I suppose. But I know I could sell those ‘Meditations;’ I will play them again, lest I should forget any part of them, before they can be written. There is that March, too. A little more money would not be a bad thing now I am getting weak and old. I don’t want much, but a little more firing would be a comfort all the winter; I feel as if such a winter as the last would kill me. And my poor little organ wants to be set in thorough repair; I wish I could afford to do it! If I can sell my music, I will have it done at once.”

He sat down again at his instrument, and began to play his own music carefully over, a rapt expression stealing over his face as he played. He was very poor, having little to live on besides his organist’s salary—and that was not a large one. He played very beautifully, and occasionally, in the winter time, he gave recitals in the town hall,

which added a little to his slender means ; but Pointhaven was not a very musical place, and poor Mr. Everard was not appreciated as he ought to have been. He had at last prevailed on the rector of St. Philip's to undertake the thorough repair of the church organ, which had tormented his sensitive ears every Sunday during the five years of his organistship ; but the rector, like the organ, was old, and had been very slow to move in the matter, and Mr. Everard's patience had become almost exhausted before the workmen had been sent for. He had lately applied for the post of organist at St. Mary's, where there was a fine organ, and a more music-loving congregation, but a younger man had been chosen ; and poor Mr. Everard had to resign himself to his own less interesting and often trying post, with as much patience as he could muster.

Nobody in Pointhaven knew very much about the blind organist. The rude boys and girls in the streets laughed at him, because of his shabby attire, and other people treated him rather coolly. He did not belong to them, and they were ashamed, many of them, of his poor circumstances, and consequently avoided him. He had come to be organist of St. Philip's five years ago, and was supposed to have seen better days, as he was "quite a gentleman in his ways and his speech." People pitied him when they met him in the street, and thought it "so interesting" to see him at the organ on Sundays ; but they did not trouble themselves any further about him, and it did not seem to occur to them that a little warmth and kindness on their part might cheer the man they pitied. They did not mean to be unkind, but they were thoughtless, and Mr. Everard's life was therefore lonely, and often sad. Very sad it would have been, but for his beloved music, for which he lived.





CHAPTER V.

"Your face is as a book, where men
May read strange matters."

—*Macbeth.*

HAZEL walked on in a sort of dream after she had left Mr. Everard, clasping her little book and her sheet of music-paper close to her, and wondering if the gates of that unknown world of beautiful things were really going to be unlocked at last. Mr. Everard had promised talks about other things besides music, and as Hazel thought over the infinitude of questions which she intended by degrees to ask him, she grew almost bewildered. It seemed that she had *everything* to learn; she was constantly finding something new to wonder about and ponder over, and she hoped he would not be angry with her if she asked him so many questions.

She had reached St. Mary's churchyard by this time, at the further end of the town. Sometimes she would hear music within as she passed, and she went into the churchyard to listen. There was no music now, but the door was open, and she peeped in. Seeing no one inside, though she fancied she had heard sounds of voices before, she ventured to enter, and steal quietly to the chancel to look at the organ. After seeing Mr. Everard's, and watching him play, she felt curious to see this large, beautiful one, and to

find out if it was at all like his. It was open, and seeing nobody near, Hazel sat down and touched the keys, but she was disappointed that they would make no sound. Then she remembered that Mr. Everard had pulled out some of the little round ivory knobs on each side of the keys, before he began to play; there were a great many more "knobs" here, but she boldly drew out two or three on each side, and then touched the keys again, but still no sound came. She could not understand it, and keeping her fingers on the keys, looked round hurriedly, thinking she had heard somebody move.

Suddenly the organ sounded—just a faint, sweet sound! Hazel started with delight, and touched some more of the notes with her fingers—tremblingly—for she was half afraid at her own boldness. But the pleasure of having succeeded in making sounds at last was too sweet to be given up; she pulled out more "knobs," and found, to her great delight, that each one produced a new sound, some soft, sweet sounds, like voices singing, as she said to herself, and some loud, grand sounds, like trumpets and thunder. She did not know in the least how she was playing, but her fingers seemed to move of their own accord after the first few minutes, and she let them just go where they liked, because she had no idea where they *ought* to go. But somehow they made music, and Hazel was so entranced that she forgot all her fears of being overheard, and scolded for her boldness, till suddenly the music ceased with a gasp, and she looked down at her fingers, still upon the keys, in a fright, thinking the organ must certainly be haunted. What had made the music begin and end so suddenly? She pushed in all the stops with trembling fingers, and was just leaving her seat, when somebody came round from the back of the organ, saying—

"I am sorry that I must ask you not to play any longer, but we are repairing the organ, and we had special

orders to get it done by this evening in time for the service."

Hazel covered her face with her hands, hardly hearing what was said, in her dread of a terrible reproof for her venturesomeness, and not daring to look at the speaker, whose expression of amusement, rather than wrath, would have reassured her.

"I beg your pardon," she stammered; "I couldn't help it! I didn't know any one was here—and I wanted so much to make it sound! Have I broken it? it stopped so suddenly."

She looked up so anxiously, that her companion smiled.

"No, it only stopped because I left off blowing," he said. "It's all right."

"Blowing," said Hazel. "What is that?"

"Don't you know?" he said. "Come round here and I will show you," and he explained to her the action of the bellows, to which she listened with great interest.

"Couldn't I have made any sound, then," she asked, "if you had not been here? Were you here all the time?"

"I was up there among the pipes," he said, "mending something, and I heard you come in. I came down, thinking it was one of my workmen, and I saw you trying to play, so I went and blew for you."

"I didn't see you or hear you," said Hazel.

"No," he said, laughing. "I thought you were making discoveries, and that I would help you, so I did it quietly. Did you never try to play before?"

"No, never," said Hazel. "I never knew anything about music till to-day. Mr. Everard has been telling me a little, and I wanted to see if this organ looked like his."

Her companion looked surprised. She must have wonderful natural talent, he thought, if she could even play as she had done just now, without knowing anything of music. It

was a queer sort of playing certainly, but she had evidently a capital idea of harmony, and would learn to play well with very little difficulty. Who was she? She spoke correctly, in a soft, refined voice, but her appearance puzzled him. Her dress—a plain dark blue skirt and a neat black jacket and white straw hat—was beautifully clean and tidy, but it was the dress of a respectable girl of the lower orders, while her face and her whole bearing, as she had risen from her seat at his approach, might be those of a princess, in their simple grace and dignity.

He had watched her while she had been speaking, and he thought he had never seen a more interesting face. There might be some more strictly beautiful, but in hers there was something indescribable—a wistful earnestness in the dark hazel eyes, and a mingled strength and sweetness—a power both to do and to suffer, and to suffer in silence, in the flexible and yet firm mouth. There was a dignity in her manner too, and a grace in her movements, which surely could not belong to a girl of low station.

“Mr. Everard is the organist of St. Philip’s, is he not?” he asked. “We have a good deal of work to do to his organ. This is a beautiful one, is it not?”

“Yes,” said Hazel. “Will you play it?” she added, timidly. “Would it trouble you very much, to play it just a *few* minutes?”

“Certainly not,” he answered, and sat down at once, and played such music as Hazel had never heard before.

She wondered whether Mr. Everard could play this large organ as well as this stranger played it. She had enjoyed hearing *him* play, a little while ago, but now—the tears came into her eyes in her excitement, and she could hardly keep from crying out. Then she looked at the stranger, and wondered how she had dared to ask him to play to her. For he was a gentleman, though he was mending organs, and he was young and beautiful, with fair,

golden-brown hair, and dark blue-grey eyes, which shone as he played, and seemed to light up his face all over. Hazel blushed, as she thought that he must have thought her very bold and forward for speaking so freely to him, and she had made up her mind to run home as soon as he stopped playing, when he turned, and began to explain to her about the stops he had been using, and the music he had been playing; and she grew so much interested, that she forgot that she was the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, and that she had not been accustomed to talk about organs, and listen to beautiful music all her life. And she forgot that when she went home, there would be tea to prepare, and cups and saucers to wash afterwards, and perhaps fish to pack or unpack, and that Jack would put his knife in his mouth at tea-time, and sit in the corner and smoke afterwards till he went away. She seemed to lead two separate lives, and the one was for the moment entirely forgotten. Poor Jack little thought how small a part he played in the other!

The entrance of some workmen into the church cut short the conversation, which had become deeply interesting both to Hazel and her companion, and Hazel started as she noticed that the church was beginning to grow dark.

"Oh, I must go home," she exclaimed. "Thank you, sir, so much for all you have told me!—I beg your pardon for touching the organ," she added, flushing scarlet, to think that he had heard her poor attempt at playing; "I never did before, and I really couldn't help it!"

"I don't believe you could," said her companion, smiling. "You did no harm. Have you far to go to your home?"

"It is a good way," said Hazel. "I live at the lighthouse."

"Perilpoint Lighthouse?" he said. "But you are not——"

"I am the lighthouse-keeper's daughter," said Hazel, with a mixture of pride and humility in her voice, which

touched her listener. He, too, had forgotten himself while he talked with her about the organ—a topic of such interest to him, that he had been delighted to find some one who sympathised with him in his love for it—and he was so startled by her announcement, that he exclaimed incredulously, “Are you sure?”

“Sure!” exclaimed Hazel, astonished at the question; “why, yes, sir!”

And she remembered that Mr. Everard had also seemed to doubt her statement. It was very odd, but while she was amused at it, another feeling took possession of her—a wild longing that she might have been born something else instead of a lighthouse-keeper’s daughter—or rather, for that seemed such an unkind thought to her dear father and mother, that *they* had been born different to what they were, and had belonged to this *other* life, in which she had been living all this afternoon, and especially during this last half-hour. It seemed cruel that she could *feel* as she did, and be mistaken by others for what she was not, and yet be *what she was*. She drew back suddenly from the organ with an expression on her face which her companion did not know what to make of—an expression of such mingled pride and humility, and hopelessness and longing.

“I beg your pardon,” he said, gently; “it does not matter, you know. Only I could not believe you for a minute. You have puzzled me,” he added, with a frank smile, which seemed to heal the sore spot in Hazel’s heart.

“I puzzle myself every day!” she cried, passionately. “Oh, I wish I was—I wish I might love these beautiful things! They tell me I have no right to love them, but I cannot—oh, I cannot help it! What shall I do? I cannot be as they are, and I must. It is so hard!”

The young man knew not what reply to make to this outbreak. He was strangely touched, and very much bewildered. Either she must be dreaming, or *he* must be, he

thought. Where did these strange feelings of hers come from? How had she come to be so different from the people of her class; and what could he say to her? He wished he had not heard what she was. He could not understand it, and it made him feel very uncomfortable to see her in such distress: he pitied her from the bottom of his heart.

"You may love beautiful things," he said, gently; "everybody may."

"But it is no good to love them," said Hazel, very sadly; "I may not have them. Mother says they only do harm to—to *us*. And it is dreadful to live among your own people, and not feel like them! I can't feel as they do, and like the things they like; they don't know why I cannot, and I do not know myself. It vexes my father and mother, and they wish I was like them, but I can't be! And I am so sorry I cannot please them better!"

"Are they not kind to you?" asked her companion, in an indignant tone.

"Oh, yes!" cried Hazel, "very kind. But I know they wish I was different—and I can't help it. And they cannot understand why I love these things—and it is so hard to keep them all to myself always!"

"I am so sorry for you," said the young man, compassionately. "Perhaps they will understand better one day."

Hazel shook her head. Then her face flushed crimson, as she said, in a low voice, "Please forgive me, sir, for talking to you like this—but I was so happy hearing you play, and I think I had forgotten who I was. When I think about these things, they seem to make me forget—but indeed I did not mean to be forward and bold!"

"You were not," he said, earnestly; "do not think so. I do not regret our talk. I sometimes forget who I am, when I am playing."

He laughed, wishing to make her forget her troubles and uneasiness.

It was a strangely wistful look with which Hazel looked at him in reply, and her lips quivered as she tried to smile too. She wished him good night respectfully, and hurried away.

Arthur Thursfield, for he it was, stood watching her down the aisle, feeling after she had gone as if he had seen a vision. He rubbed his eyes with his hand, and tried in vain to reconcile her face and her manners with her simple statement—"I am the lighthouse-keeper's daughter." If she were, she had no business to be—he felt sure of that; and the thought almost made him angry. That wistful, imploring look in her eyes haunted him as he went on with his work at the organ-pipes, and then he felt vexed with himself because he could not get rid of the remembrance of it. At any rate he was glad to have given her a little pleasure by playing to her, and explaining a few of the things which puzzled her. If she had not told him who she was, he would never have guessed—except that her dress had puzzled him—that she was in any way inferior in station to himself. He could not make her out. How quickly she had understood all he had been explaining to her, and how thoroughly she had enjoyed the music! How had she learnt to love those things, which she said she must *not* love! And how could a face like hers *possibly* belong to a lighthouse-keeper's daughter. Arthur Thursfield came to the conclusion that the world was more strange than he had thought it, and that there was a great mistake somewhere—though he did not precisely know in *what*.

By the time Hazel reached the beach she felt in a calmer frame of mind, and the exertion of rowing across the bay did her good, and helped to dispel the tumultuous thoughts which had been whirling through her brain after she had left the church. She had then shrunk with a sort

of dread from returning to her other life, and from seeing Jack, who, she knew, would claim all her attention for the rest of the evening, till it was time for him to go home, and whose eyes would follow her wherever she went, in that manner which was so provoking to her—as if she were a piece of his property. She almost hoped that he might be offended at her long absence, and have gone home. However, when she reached the cove, and saw the lights twinkling out one by one from the lighthouse, her love for her home, in spite of its trials, all returned, and she climbed up the rocky path, resolving to treat poor Jack kindly, and thinking that if her father and mother *could* suddenly change into the people she had often dreamed they were, she would perhaps be sorry after all—for what would become of the lighthouse and the rocks she loved so much? She could not realise any life apart from them: they were connected with all her childish recollections, and she thought she should never like to go anywhere where she could not see those lamps shining out on the water every night. The *two lives* were joined together after all. She would not have liked to choose between them, and yet, would the sound of that organ, as the stranger played it, *ever* cease to run in her head? Hazel put her hands over her ears, as if to shut it out, and ran indoors.

"Why, child," said her mother, "where *have* you been? I was getting quite scared about you, that I was. And here's father and Jack been to Marston's Ferry and back this half-hour; and Jack's quite angry-like, to think you wasn't in a' waiting for him."

"Oh, mother, I am sorry I am late!" exclaimed Hazel. "I meant to help you to get the tea, and you have done it all! But oh, mother, I have had such a nice afternoon!"

"So folks might think, to look at the colour you've got," said Mrs. Manlinson, surveying her daughter with pride. "Never you mind about the tea, lass. I like you to be

happy, my girl; and if it ain't after *my* fashion, I can't help it."

"Where have you been?" asked Jack, rather growlingly, as Hazel slipped into the room quietly, and took her seat at the table. "I don't come to see you very often, and you go off just as soon as you can get away from me! Why couldn't you bide at home for once?"

"I didn't think you wanted me," said Hazel; "you were talking to father. And it's a long way to Marston's Ferry—I couldn't have gone there with you, and it would have been a pity for you not to show father your steamer. Is it a nice one, father?"

"'Tis a good berth for Jack," said Manlinson. "It's a trim little concern, and Jack will have good pay. You and I will take a trip to Waterton some day, Hazel, when I've time."

Jack's countenance beamed with pleasure, but Hazel acquiesced very quietly.

"What book have ye got there?" asked Jack, as she laid aside her precious music-book and paper, to wait till after her cousin's departure.

"A little book about music," she answered. "A blind gentleman gave it to me—the gentleman who plays the organ at St. Philip's. I am going to learn to write out his music for him, because he has no one to do it always when he wants it done, and I must learn *how*."

"What good'll *that* do you?" asked Jack. "Music ain't for we. What do you want to be a fine lady for, Hazel?"

"I *don't* want to be a fine lady," said Hazel, tears starting to her eyes, "but the blind gentleman asked me to write his music for him. I never asked him to teach me; but I do want to learn so much! Father, you don't mind, do you? I do want to know so many things, and he will tell me some of them—he said he would."

"I don't know what good it'll all do you," said her father, dubiously. "You know enough to please me, and mother, and Jack. But there, don't cry, lass; you shall learn if you will. You're a good girl, and mother and I don't mind, if you're so set on it. There, tell us all about the blind gentleman, and what you've been doing this long while."

Hazel drove back the tears that were trembling on her eyelashes, and gave an account of her afternoon, saying but little of the latter part of it, however, for she had an idea that perhaps the stranger at St. Mary's would not be pleased, if it became known that he had been playing and talking to—somebody who was only the lighthouse-keeper's daughter. She did not want him to be vexed about it by anybody, and she knew that people were often very ready to vex each other on very small pretexts, so she said very little about St. Mary's. Besides, she was afraid her father and mother would be shocked at her having dared to touch the organ, and she never would be able to make them understand how very much she had longed to do it, and how the tempting rows of white keys had fascinated her beyond all power of resistance. She chatted in a friendly way to Jack after tea, for he had always been a kind friend to her, and she was sorry to have vexed him, and made him so cross. And in his pleasure of seeing her more like his little cousin Hazel of old, he forgot his beloved pipe, to her great relief. He went away at last, and Hazel was then free to study her little book, which she pored over till bed-time, occasionally varying her study by copying out notes and rests, and flats and sharps on her music-paper, taking infinite pains to make them all as clear and elegant in form as possible. Her father and mother laughed, and wondered what pleasure the child could find in covering a sheet of paper with those black marks, which *they* didn't see the good of. But they let her alone, seeing how happy she was.

"Think she's a fancy for Jack, mother?" said Manlinson, when they were alone over their fire, after Hazel had gone to bed. "He's a good lad, and he's fond of her, but I told him to-day to let her be. She's but a child yet, and it ain't no good to worry her."

"I don't know who she'll ever have a fancy for," said her mother, "with her notions. 'Taint her fault neither, poor lass. I don't want her to think about settlin' down yet, Manlinson; don't you put it into her head. If Jack wants her, he must wait; he's but twenty, and he didn't ought to think of marryin' yet awhile."

"I told him so," said the lighthouse-keeper, "and I told him our lass would say 'No' pretty quick, if he asked her anything o' that sort yet. What do ye suppose makes her so different from other lasses, wife?"

"All folks ain't alike," said Mrs. Manlinson, stooping to rake out the fire. "Come, Manlinson, 'tis bed-time. The fire's going, and I'm tired. We'll have to stir betimes in the morning, if you're going fishing again."

Hazel could not sleep for a long while that night—she was too excited about her new work; and when she did sleep at last, it was to be visited with all sorts of strange dreams, one being that she was helping her mother to unpack a huge basket of fish, among which mingled a confused mass of semibreves, crotchets, and quavers, which she vainly endeavoured to separate and bring to order. And in turning over the fish she found, to her astonishment, that some of them had two tails, and some even three, and while she was hopelessly trying to recollect the long names by which these peculiar species were designated, she awoke!





CHAPTER VI.

"If it be man's work, I will do it."

—*King Lear.*

LILIAN THURSFIELD awoke on Friday morning in some excitement, and her first thought was to draw up the blinds to see if the day was fine. It was beautiful, and not at all cold, and she went downstairs quite determined that her aunts should allow her to accompany them to the town in the afternoon, when they went to their working-party. However, she said nothing about it at breakfast-time, thinking that by waiting till midday, when the sun would be quite warm, she would have more chance of obtaining her request.

The dining-room at the Tower was a pleasant room, and the table, with its white damask linen, and pretty china and silver, and little vases of autumn leaves and flowers, looked exceedingly bright and comfortable, with the firelight shining upon it. Lilian sighed as she took her place at it, longing that Arthur could share the comforts which she enjoyed; and as she glanced at her Aunt Winifred presiding at the end of the table with her usual calmness and dignity, and with, of course, no thought of her nephew in her mind at all, she felt exceedingly wrathful against her, and wished that *she* could know what it was to work hard as Arthur

did, and have no comfortable home and well-spread table—just that she might feel how hard-hearted she was in keeping him from her doors.

Miss Winifred and Miss Evelyn Raymond were sisters of Lilian's dead mother. They would hardly have been taken for sisters themselves—they were so unlike in appearance. Miss Winifred, the elder of the two, was a tall, stoutly-built lady, with dark hair and eyes, and very decided features. She had probably been very handsome in her youth, and was still considered a very good-looking person, though her face needed softness to make it quite a pleasant one to look at. Great strength of character and power of will were seen in every line of her countenance; it was easy to see that Miss Raymond could be very unrelenting towards an offender, and that if she once gave her word on any subject, she would be very slow to take it back. Her sister, Miss Evelyn, was a complete contrast—small and slender of figure, and exceedingly gentle in appearance. Her fair hair and soft blue eyes, and small, delicate features were like her niece Lilian's, though the hair was streaked with grey, and her voice was low and timid. She revered her stronger-minded sister, and relied upon her at all times, seldom venturing to assert openly a contrary opinion—though Lilian knew that she did not always agree with her in her heart, and that in the case of Arthur her Aunt Evelyn had *almost* come to a quarrel with her sister.

Arthur's offence was, that he had refused to agree to his aunt's plan of sending him to the University, and that he had instead insisted upon entering an organ-building business, on leaving school, at the age of seventeen. It was necessary for him to make money for a special purpose, in which his aunt would never help him. She had absolutely refused to help in the matter, though she might easily have undertaken it herself, and so left her nephew free to follow her wishes—and his own secret ones—for his future; and as

it was a matter which concerned Arthur and Lilian very nearly, he had resolved to be independent of her, to give up his University career, and enter business, that he might make the necessary money for himself. He was passionately fond of music, and the business which he preferred to any other was that of organ-building. His aunt had declared that she would never own him if he chose such an employment—or in fact any business at all—and there had been a storm when he had told her, that he had entered into an engagement with the firm of Woodward & Co., to begin work immediately. This was three years ago, and during that time Miss Winifred had held no communication with her rebellious nephew. He had chosen his own course, and must abide by it, and beyond writing to him occasionally, Lilian was also forbidden to have anything to do with him. They had contrived, however, to meet secretly a few times, for Lilian felt that her brother was in the right, and that if she owed obedience to her aunt, on whom she was dependent, she also owed a duty to him, her only brother. In spite of her gentle nature she had plenty of spirit, and she would have joined Arthur, and worked for her living also, but that she could better aid the object for which he worked by remaining where she was, and saving all she could for him out of her own liberal allowance of pocket-money. And having her Aunt Evelyn on her side was a comfort, and helped her to bear the long lectures which her Aunt Winifred was fond of founding upon Arthur's wilfulness and disobedience to her wishes.

Arthur and Lilian had been left in their aunts' charge by their mother, who had died when Lilian was only ten, and Arthur twelve years of age. Their father was abroad at the time; he was in the army, and Lilian had only seen him twice since her mother's death. He had spent all his wife's money before her death, and his children had been entirely dependent upon their aunts from that time. *They*

were well off, Miss Winifred having been amply provided for in her youth by her godmother, who had died, leaving her a nice little fortune. Miss Evelyn too had a small provision of her own, in addition to the income which she and her sister inherited jointly from their parents. She had been engaged, when quite young, but her lover had died just a month before the marriage was to have taken place, and had bequeathed to her—his widow, all but in name—his property. Poor Evelyn Raymond had been nearly broken-hearted, but she had struggled back to life from a sharp sickness, and had taken up her burden patiently. She had gone back to her usual duties, with only this difference—that all the spirit seemed to have died out of her, and all the bright ring to have gone from her voice. She had been very quiet and gentle since that sad time—timid, and shrinking from conflicts with her sister's stronger will ; but she was happy and cheerful now, finding her chief happiness in visiting, and in ministering to the wants of the poor.

Miss Winifred too had had a "disappointment," but of a different nature to that of her sister. She too had been engaged in her youth, to one whom she had believed in, and trusted with all the eagerness of her strong, vehement nature. He had proved false and had jilted her, and when she lost him, she lost in her pride and indignation her faith in all *mankind*. The whole race were henceforth treated by Winifred Raymond with the direst scorn ; the only individual of the species on whom she had ever again condescended to smile was her nephew Arthur, in whom, in spite of her scorn of his sex, she had felt an interest. It was therefore doubly unfortunate that Arthur had been obliged to fight against her wishes, and choose his own independent path of life ; but there was one point on which he and his aunt could not agree, and as it was one upon which he had very strong notions of duty, he could

not have done otherwise than he *had* done. It was a duty undiscovered by him till the time of his leaving school, three years before our story commences, and then it was only as it were by accident—by a conversation overheard between his two aunts—that it was discovered by him at last. But once discovered, it would not be forgotten, and the only way to fulfil it was by means of money. Money of his own Arthur Thursfield had none; he owed everything to his two aunts, especially to his Aunt Winifred, who had the larger fortune, and to whose special care he and his sister had been confided. She had no disposition to help him in the discharge of this duty, and she could not permit her sister to recognise any obligation in the matter any more than herself. And as Arthur felt that he could not urge their help, it simply remained to him to take the burden wholly upon his own shoulders.

In those three years he had risen to great favour with his employers, and his suggestions, as he had laughingly told Lilian, were really of great service to them. He was exceedingly clever at his business, and had lately been appointed to a higher position in the works, and was director and overseer of the work now going on at Point-haven, the firm having entrusted it entirely to his hands. Young as he was, he had suffered no harm from the necessary contact with a class of men inferior, both in mind and station, to himself, and as he rose in his business he found more congenial associates. Besides, he had kept very much to himself *out* of working hours, and the men had soon learned to respect "Gentleman Thursfield," as he was called; and seeing that he was a being of a different order to themselves, had let him alone, to follow his own devices in his leisure hours, which devices were generally explorations of churches in search of organs, resulting for him in friendships with half the organists in London. To him it was a very interesting life, and he did not find that any of

his old friends, with the exception of his Aunt Winifred, were ashamed of him. Many of them thought it a Quixotic notion of his to throw up the advantages of a University career when offered to him, and take to business instead; but they supposed that he was too proud to allow himself to be a burden to his aunts, when he could earn his own living. Only one or two of his most intimate friends knew the secret of his work—the object for which it had been undertaken—and they respected and honoured him for his choice of the path, which he always made the best of, saying that it was “all organs,” if not “all roses.”

Lilian, meditating upon her brother, as she ate her breakfast, was startled when Aunt Winifred remarked—“How silent you are this morning, child! What are you thinking about?”

“Thinking she would be glad to get out of doors this fine day, I should think,” said Miss Evelyn. “She has been shut up so long, poor child; no wonder she feels dull. Don’t you think she might venture out to-day, Winifred? See how brightly the sun is shining.”

Lilian could have hugged her aunt on the spot for so favouring her plans, but she only looked up eagerly.

“Yes, it is warm,” said Miss Raymond. “You may come down to the vicarage with us this afternoon, if you like, Lilian, and you can go and do the shopping you have been wishing to do while we are at the working-party. So do not tire yourself this morning, or I shall not allow you to go.”

“I will go to bed again till dinner-time, Aunt Winifred,” said Lilian, laughing, “if only I can get out in the afternoon. I am so tired of being indoors. I shall find plenty to amuse myself with, while you and Aunt Evelyn are sewing.”

“Do not spare your money in making your purchases,” said Miss Raymond, as she rose from the breakfast-table. “Let everything you buy be as *good* as possible. If your

funds run short, you know I am always willing to supply you with a little extra."

"Thank you, aunt," said Lilian, gratefully, "you are very kind." But she felt a little guilty, having already made up her mind that these necessary purchases should cost as little as possible, in order that she might have a little more money to put by for Arthur.

She set out with Miss Raymond and her sister directly after dinner, in high spirits. The walk to Pointhaven, down the long hill, fringed with oaks and elms, and along a pretty country road for a quarter of a mile, was always a pleasant one, but it had never seemed *so* pleasant to Lilian as to-day, when she was going to see her brother, and it cannot be denied that the excitement attending a visit paid in secret added to her enjoyment.

But things did not turn out exactly as she and Arthur had expected. Lilian and her aunts were rather earlier at Pointhaven than Arthur had imagined they would be, and, thinking that he would have time before their arrival to run down to Mr. Everard's, to speak to him about the work on the organ, he was on his way thither, when, turning a sharp corner, he came face to face with his sister and both the Miss Raymonds. The countenances of the four persons, thus unexpectedly met together, might have amused a looker-on. Arthur's expressed chiefly surprise, with some amount of amusement; Lilian's, great consternation; Miss Winifred's, horror and amazement; while Miss Evelyn's gentle blue eyes glanced from one to the other, with a troubled expression, and her face showed in turn, joy at the sight of her nephew, anxious sympathy with Lilian, and some fear and perturbation of spirit at the prospect of an altercation between Arthur and her sister.

"Well, Lily," said Arthur, at last, with a smile, "haven't you anything to say to me?—Aunt Evelyn—Aunt Winifred, won't you shake hands?"

Miss Evelyn did so most readily, while Lillian went bravely to her brother's side, and slipped her hand through his arm. Miss Raymond still stood aghast.

"*Arthur!*" she exclaimed, at last. "You are not content with disregarding my wishes, and choosing your own wilful way, but you actually follow me *here*, to insult me!"

They were in a quiet street, and there was no one in sight, and Miss Winifred's indignation got the better of her first determination to pass on without taking any notice of her nephew.

"No, Aunt Winifred," said Arthur, "I have come here to mend organs, not to insult you—or anybody else. And out of special regard for *your* feelings, I am Mr. *Miller* while I am here, instead of Mr. Thursfield."

"I am glad you do not disgrace your sister by venturing to appear in the very town where she resides under *her* name!" retorted Miss Raymond, haughtily. "To think that a nephew of *mine* should be brought so low as to be forced to take a feigned name, for fear of disgracing his relatives! And you are actually *dusty!*"

Arthur could not forbear a smile at this last accusation, spoken in his aunt's most horror-stricken tones, and Lillian had a fit of coughing to disguise her laughter.

"I have not taken a feigned name for fear of disgracing anybody, Aunt Winifred," he answered. "I am not ashamed of my work, nor of appearing here under my own name, in the least—nor would Lillian be. I have assumed the name of Miller simply to avoid offending you."

"You should not have dared to show your face here at all," said Miss Winifred. "I call it a sheer insult to me, Arthur."

"I mean no insult, aunt," replied Arthur. "I am at Pointhaven because my business obliges my presence here. No one has any idea, or *need* have any idea, that you and I



HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH HIS SISTER, AND BOTH THE MISS RAYMONDS.—Page 55.

have anything to do with each other; I, at least, had no intention of letting them know. Come, Aunt Winifred, you and I have disputed often enough about this matter; you know we shall never agree about it, so why should we begin a fresh dispute? As I have met you, I am going to ask your permission to have my sister's company this afternoon, for an hour or two, unless you will invite me to the Tower, to see her and you all there, instead."

"To the Tower!" exclaimed Miss Raymond, lifting her hands. "No, Arthur, you have shut the doors of the Tower against yourself, and *you* must open them." Lilian squeezed her brother's arm. "I shall never do it for you. You have disgraced me and my sister—yes, Evelyn, I *will* say so—and you are disgracing your own only sister, who deserves a better brother. And for what? I tell you, Arthur, your scheme is ridiculous, and if it *should* ever be realised, it will only have to be repeated a few years afterwards."

"I do not know that," said Arthur, gravely. "We cannot tell what is in the future, and I venture to hope that the realisation of my scheme may produce some effect. Now, how long may I keep Lilian?" he added, brightly. "It is quite early yet, and we can have a nice long afternoon together."

"I have not given Lilian permission to remain with you," said Miss Winifred, sternly. "Lilian, at least, is under my control, and I expect obedience from *her*, and regard for my wishes."

"Oh, Aunt Winifred!" cried Lilian, "do please let me stay with Arthur just this one afternoon! I *must* stay with him; he is my brother, and no one shall keep me from him! *You* would not like to be forbidden to see your brother, Aunt Winifred!"

"I am thankful to say that I never had a brother," said her aunt, majestically. "They are all alike—not a pin to

choose between one and another. The heart of man is deceitful, truly."

"Shall I come to St. Philip's Vicarage for you, aunt?" asked Lilian, meekly. "Your party is over at five, is it not? That will give us a nice long afternoon. It is quite time for you to be going, aunt; I see two or three ladies hurrying in this direction."

"This way?" said Miss Raymond, in horror. "Arthur, I beg that you will leave us immediately; *I* do not wish to be seen with you. Well, Lilian, you may remain for a while with your brother, just this once, but I have a great objection to your being seen in his company. You shall follow him in a few minutes. Remember, I shall not excuse you a moment after five o'clock, so don't keep me waiting. Evelyn, what are you saying to that foolish boy? Do not let him over-persuade *you*. Arthur, I am only sorry that I *ever* deluded myself with the idea that you were more to be trusted than the rest of your sex."

"You expected too much of me, Aunt Winifred," he answered, gravely. "I am afraid I can't always keep myself tuned up to *that* pitch of excellence."

"You must exercise strength of mind, Evelyn, strength of mind," continued Miss Raymond, scorning the interruption, and she walked off, without another look at her nephew, her sister following her, after whispering a few affectionate words to Arthur.

Lilian, in obedience to her aunt's commands, allowed Arthur to precede her to St. Philip's, whither, after loitering a few minutes at a shop-window, she followed him.

"She is no better, Arthur," said Lilian, mournfully, as her brother met her in the churchyard; "she never *will* forgive you, I am afraid."

"Never is a long day," said Arthur, cheerfully. "Poor Aunt Winifred! I am very sorry to disappoint her, and hurt

her pride so much, if she only would believe it! I'm glad she didn't make more fuss about your staying with me this afternoon. When I saw you all three in front of me, I was rather horrified to think our afternoon was perhaps to be spoiled after all."

"Nobody shall keep me from seeing my brother, when I have the chance," said Lilian, stoutly. "Now, what shall we do? Must you work this afternoon?"

"No," answered Arthur, "I was up an hour earlier this morning, and at work here before the others, so as to be free for a little while now. We'll take an hour's stroll down the road past the church; then we shan't walk through any part of the town together, which would scandalise Aunt Winnie. I must go and set the men to work first, though."

"You won't finish your work to-morrow, will you?" asked Lilian, as they left the church together, after Arthur had given his orders, she waiting outside while he did so.

"No, we have pulled the organ almost all to pieces," said Arthur. "It is a longer job than we expected, and it will take us part of next week, as well as to-morrow, to finish it. So, Lily, I shall pay you another visit by means of the 'Jungle' before I go; next Tuesday or Wednesday night you may expect me."

"I'll be in my room," said Lilian. "Do you know, the morning after your last visit, cook came to me with a most solemn face, and asked if I had heard sounds in the 'Jungle' the evening before. *She* had, and she was sure there was a ghost about, and she actually wanted me to give up sleeping in the turret-chamber, lest I should be attacked by it some night!"

"Silly old thing," said Arthur, laughing. "What rooms are beneath yours? There are no other windows looking out into that bit of garden, are there?"

"No," said Lilian; "there is a bed-room under *my* room, and a store-room under that, but the windows of both look out another way, so you are quite safe. Arthur, have you seen that blind gentleman, who plays the organ at St. Philip's—Mr. Everard?"

"I went to see him last night about the organ," answered Arthur, "and I was going again, when I met you. Poor fellow, he must be horribly lonely, and he seems very poor. He's a thorough gentleman, though. I hope people are kind to him?"

"I don't know," said Lilian; "we don't know much about him. Mr. Roper, the vicar, is very old, you know, and his wife, too, and I don't fancy they trouble themselves very much about him. I always feel sorry for him, because he looks so patient and kind, and so sorrowful sometimes; and though he is blind, he plays so beautifully!"

"He ought to have a better organ to play on," said Arthur. "Yours at St. Philip's is a disgrace to a civilised town, Lilian! Mr. Roper should get up a subscription for a new one. Poor Mr. Everard told me he had had immense trouble in getting him to have this old thing repaired."

"Mr. Roper doesn't care for music," said Lilian, "and doesn't know whether the organ is out of tune or not. But he is a nice old man, and does a great deal of good. I am very fond of him. I should like to know Mr. Everard—I like his face so much. I wonder what made him so poor?"

"I don't know," said Arthur. "He is very clever—I could see that, though I was only with him a few minutes."

"So are you," said Lilian, in a decided tone. "I wish I could make Aunt Winifred respect you as she ought to do. But you really *are* very dusty, Mr. Miller!"

Arthur laughed.

"So would you be, if you had been at my work," he said.

"Lilian, shall I tell you all about my visit to *him* the other day? I didn't tell you much about it that night after all."

Lilian's face grew sober, but she eagerly assented, and the remainder of their time together was spent in grave talk, to which we have no business to listen, as, being carried on chiefly in whispers, it was evidently not meant for any ears but their own.





CHAPTER VII.

“To wilful men,
The injuries that they themselves procure
Must be their schoolmasters.” —*King Lear.*

LILIAN parted reluctantly from her brother at St. Philip's door, a few minutes before five, and hurried on to the Vicarage, where she arrived punctually as the clock struck.

“You are very punctual, dear Lilian,” said her Aunt Evelyn, smiling, as she entered the drawing-room, where the ladies of the working-party were now regaling themselves with afternoon tea after their labours.

“She is looking well, very well,” said Mrs. Roper, a placid, comfortable-looking old lady, with a beaming face, as she came forward to greet Lilian. “I heard that you had been suffering from a bad cold, my dear, but you look quite blooming this afternoon. Sit down, and let me give you a cup of tea.”

“How is your Sunday-school class progressing, Miss Thursfield?” asked another lady, drawing her chair nearer to Lilian's. “My boys are shockingly troublesome. I have been threatening Mrs. Roper to give them up.”

“Oh, but you will not do anything of the kind, you know,” said Mrs. Roper, placidly. “She does not mean it, Lilian, my dear. But we have all been talking over our

experiences this afternoon, and Mrs. Argyle's have certainly been trying. Your class is a pattern one, Lilian. Mr. Roper always says so. So you have been looking into the church to see the old organ repaired. How are the workmen going on?"

"Very well, I think," answered Lilian, feeling her cheeks burn. "I only peeped in, but I thought they seemed very busy. It will be a great improvement when the work is finished, Mrs. Roper."

"Ah, I daresay," said the old lady. "The superintendent of the works is a fine young fellow. Have you seen him, Miss Raymond? He called here yesterday to speak to Mr. Roper about the organ, and we were quite struck with him—such a very superior young man he seemed to be—in fact, a thorough gentleman."

Lilian plunged hastily into conversation with Mrs. Argyle about her Sunday class, nearly turning her back upon Mrs. Roper. She was intensely relieved when her Aunt Winifred, after making an unconcerned answer to the effect that she *had* seen him, and that appearances were often deceitful, rose from her seat, saying, "Lilian, my dear, we must be going at once, or you will renew your cold by being out late. It will be nearly six o'clock by the time we are home."

"Yes, the days grow short rapidly," said Mrs. Roper; "and it is cold after sundown. Your niece looks delicate, certainly, Miss Raymond, but the air of Pointhaven will do her great good, I am sure. It is considered a very healthy place. You are sure you will not have another cup of tea? Good-bye, then, my love;" and she kissed Lilian affectionately. "Your aunts have promised to bring you to spend an evening with us soon."

Miss Winifred walked on in dignified silence after leaving the Vicarage, not deigning to ask her niece a single question about her interview with her brother. At last, however,

when they had nearly reached home, she exclaimed suddenly, "See the unpleasant position in which I am placed, Lillian, by your ungrateful brother! He might, I think, have refrained from coming to the very place in which I reside. I call it a deliberate insult."

"Indeed he could not help it, Aunt Winifred," pleaded Lillian. "He was obliged to come when Woodward's people were sent for. They are the makers of the organ at St. Mary's, and of course Mr. Roper took the opportunity of employing them, as they were coming to work there. Arthur could not refuse to come to Pointhaven any more than to any other place; and he calls himself 'Miller' while he is here, on purpose not to vex you."

"He vexes me every day of my life," said Miss Winifred. "I had made up my mind that Arthur should be a bishop. With his talents he might have done anything. But there is not one of them to be trusted. Never put *your* faith in any man, Lillian. You are infatuated about your brother, and see no faults in him; but he will disappoint you, you may be sure of it."

"I don't think so, Aunt Winifred," answered Lillian, with tears in her eyes. "I am not ashamed of him, and I think he is doing quite right. If he had gone to the University, and become a clergyman, it would have taken him very much longer to do what he hopes to do, than it will now. And I think *that* is his first duty. If I had been a man, Aunt Winifred, I would have done the same. I should have thought I *ought* to do it."

"I daresay!" said her aunt, scornfully. "Your poor, dear mother! I wonder what she would have thought of her son's disrespect to the wishes of the guardian with whom she left him?"

"I think our mother would have wished Arthur to do what he is doing, Aunt Winifred," said Lillian. "I am quite sure she would. Oh, aunt! you don't know how sorry

he is to fight against you like this. It is hard enough for him when he has to save up every penny he can spare, and can have no comforts like what we have, and when you see him you won't say a kind word to him."

"Don't cry about it, child," said Miss Winifred, relenting a little, as Lillian covered her face with her hands. "Arthur should not have wilfully displeased me, and he must bear his own punishment. He has made his bed and he must lie on it. I have allowed you to see him this afternoon, very much against my wishes, and I allow you to correspond with him. You should be glad of *so* much liberty. No, Evelyn, I do not wish to hear another word on the matter. You are too soft-hearted—it has always been your failing. I wish, if possible, to train Lillian differently."

"Lillian is a good child," said Miss Evelyn, kissing her as they went indoors. "It is quite natural that she should feel as she does. I assure you, Winifred, *my* nerves have been quite shaken all the afternoon by our unexpected meeting with Arthur."

"People should not have nerves," said Miss Winifred, decidedly. "They are a great mistake. I am thankful that I am not troubled with them." And she went to her room with her most stately step, and shut her door conclusively behind her. Nevertheless, she was very kind, and more gentle in manner than usual, to both her sister and Lillian, all the evening, though she did not breathe a word of Arthur.

Lillian drew a stool to her Aunt Evelyn's feet after tea, and told her in whispers about her talk with her brother, finding in her a sympathising listener. She had just gone to her room at night, when she heard a low tap at her door, and her Aunt Evelyn entered, saying, timidly, as she placed a purse in her niece's hand, "My dear, if you should see Arthur again, I should like you to give him this. It is only a little sum, which, I thought, might help him. Your

Aunt Winifred does not know I give it, so do not mention it downstairs.—No, do not thank me, my love; I can well spare it. I should like to help you, poor children, for it is a long task for you.”

She left the room quickly; and Lilian, opening the purse, found in it four five-pound notes.

“Dear Aunt Evelyn!” she said to herself; “how very good of her! How pleased Arthur will be with such a nice large sum! I long to give it to him—though I hardly like taking it. But she likes to give it, I know, and as it is for *him*, I could not refuse it.”

Lilian burst into tears, as she knelt down and thanked God for giving that unexpected help to Arthur, and prayed that her Aunt Winifred might forgive him in time, and not keep him separated from her always. She loved Arthur so much—her only brother—and she knew that he felt the separation from her much more than he would allow. Her tears fell fast for a few minutes, but she rose from her knees, comforted, and resolved, as she laid her head on her pillow, to go on waiting patiently, hoping that all might be made smooth at last.

After parting from Lilian, Arthur hurried on to Mr. Everard's, having a little matter concerning the organ to consult him about. He started when, on being ushered into the organist's parlour, he found there the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, busily employed in writing music at the blind man's dictation. Hazel rose respectfully as he entered, the colour coming into her face as she remembered the previous afternoon. He nodded and smiled at her in a friendly manner, saying—

“I fear I am interrupting your studies. Mr. Everard, I had a question to ask you about our work. Shall I look in by-and-by?”

“We have almost finished our studies,” answered Mr. Everard, with a smile at his pupil. “Do not go away; I

am glad you have come. You can talk to me while Hazel finishes her work." And he rapidly told her with what to fill up her page. "My young friend is going to help me with *my* work," he said to Arthur, "and so I am first helping *her*. She is going to write out my compositions for me, when I have taught her how to do it. I am anxious to get them written down, and she is anxious for knowledge, so you see we mutually accommodate each other. We have spent a pleasant hour this afternoon, have we not, my child?"

Hazel's face brightened all over, as she answered warily, "It has been *very* pleasant! I am so much obliged to you, sir!"

"You see," said the blind man to Arthur, "my little friend here took compassion on me yesterday, when she found me groping my way in the street, and brought me home; and I discovered that she is unhappy, because of the many things which she longs to learn, and can find no friend to teach her. So she is coming to me, when she can spare the time, that I may help to make her happy, and that she may, in return, help me in that which I cannot do for myself. I fancy we are both rather in a friendless condition; is it not so, Hazel?"

"I have no friends," said Hazel; "girls like me do not care for me."

"How is that?" asked Arthur, in an amused tone.

"I don't know," said Hazel, "but I think perhaps it is because I do not like them."

She coloured crimson as she spoke, wondering whether Mr. Everard and the stranger could understand what she felt, or whether they would only think her conceited and presumptuous. Arthur looked at her, and thought that she was, indeed, little like those other girls, and he did not wonder at her not liking them. In fact, he could not realise that she was on the same level with them at all;

there was something in her face, which interested him more than he acknowledged to himself, and as he watched her, he could not help noticing that her hands, which were busied in gathering up the papers and books on the table, though a good deal sunburnt, were as small and well-shaped as his sister Lilian's.

"Did you ever go to school, Hazel?" asked Mr. Everard, "to any of the schools here in Pointhaven? Or did you learn to read and write at home?"

"I went to school when I was a little girl," said Hazel, "for a little while, but—I ran away."

She added the last three words in a whisper, and bent her head as she spoke, to hide the colour which suffused her face; and the tears rose to her eyes at the thought that perhaps they would think her a naughty, wilful girl, not worth the trouble of teaching. Arthur could not conceal a smile, and he felt his interest in this strange girl increasing.

"Why did you run away?" asked Mr. Everard, gravely. "Did you not wish to learn then as you do now?"

"Oh, yes!" answered Hazel, eagerly. "But"—and again she spoke hesitatingly, with bent head—"the children were so rude and so dirty—I did not like them; and they teased me, and it was very disagreeable—so—I ran away. And father and mother did not make me go back again."

As she spoke, a long-forgotten scene came back to Arthur's mind, recalled by her words about the "rude and dirty children." He remembered that long ago, when his mother was ill, a year or two before her death, and had come to Pointhaven with Lilian and himself for change of air, he was playing with his little sister on the beach one morning, and they had noticed a cleanly-dressed little girl not far from them, surrounded by a group of rude, noisy fishermen's children, who were teasing and annoying her and making her cry. He remembered that she was

a very pretty little girl, and that Lilian and he had much admired her pretty brown curls and bright eyes, and the roses in her cheeks, and they were angry with the dirty children for teasing her, and had driven them away; and he could see now, as clearly as if the scene were happening over again, the dignity with which the little creature had walked away a few yards, and gathering her small garments closely about her, had seated herself upon a large stone apart from all the other children, where, having dried her tears, she sat like an injured queen, till he and Lilian begged her to come and play with them. And he remembered the answer she had given in her childish accents. "You need not play with me if you don't like. I am a poor little girl, too—but I am not dirty!" and he had answered gallantly that he did not believe she *was* a poor little girl; he believed she was a little princess, dressed up to hide who she really was, like one of whom he and Lilian had just been reading in their book of Fairy Tales. The little girl's immediate reply was—"That is what I should like to be—a princess;" and when Lilian asked why, she answered—"Because then I could turn round the handle that makes music in church, like the man who goes up the steps behind the curtain into the big box;" which Arthur had, by dint of many questions and his own imagination, discovered to mean that the little girl's great ambition and longing in life was to play the barrel-organ (then in use at St. Philip's) on Sundays, the "big box" being a square pew in which the singers sat and the organ stood, raised a few steps from the floor, and closely shut in by curtains. The child explained that there were holes in the curtain just where the man sat who turned the handle, and she used to watch him with an intense longing to make music herself in the same manner.

"But you would not do that if you were a princess," Lilian had urged, having a strong feeling that the turning

of a harrel-organ, even in church, was not exactly a royal pursuit.

And the little girl had answered—"Yes, I could. If I were a princess I could do anything I liked, and I *would* turn the handle every Sunday; and I would have lots of holes in the curtain too, so that all the little girls could look through."

Arthur remembered this conversation with the pretty little stranger very vividly, and that he and Lillian had been vexed afterwards that they had forgotten to ask her name. They had not seen her again, and he would probably not have thought again of the scene, had not Hazel's explanation of the reason of her running away from school recalled it like a sudden flash to his memory. Of course she was the same little girl—there was no doubt of it. He remembered her face now, with the big, dark eyes which had looked so bright, and at the same time so wistful, when she had confessed her longing to "turn the handle!" He still thought she was more like the "princess in disguise" than anything else he could think of, and he asked her if she remembered that morning on the sands. Hazel, too, had an undefined feeling that she had seen the strange young gentleman's face before, and when he told her laughingly about the barrel-organ, she, too, suddenly remembered; though, being four years younger than himself, her impressions of the scene were more indistinct than his. But she did remember very well her childish admiration of the little boy who had protected her—of his clustering golden-brown curls, and fair, sweet face—so different to the naughty little fellows with grimy cheeks, who had insulted her infant dignity. And she recollected her equal admiration of his little sister, whom, in her white frock, and with her fair golden hair and blue eyes, she had almost looked upon as a real little angel.

"Are you that little boy?" she exclaimed. "Oh, yes!

I can remember it now—I remember your face. You were very good to me, sir! Is your sister here too?" she added, eagerly. "She was so beautiful!"

Arthur smiled, with a pleased look, but his face clouded as he answered—"My sister is quite well, and she is beautiful still. She is not very far from here, but I cannot have her always with me now. I have my work to do, and I cannot see her as often as I should like."

Hazel looked up at him with a sympathising face. She felt sorry for him. It must be hard to be parted from such a pretty sister. She wished *she* had a brother—such a brother as—well as the little boy who had defended her on the sands long ago, and who could play organs so beautifully now he had grown into a man. She smiled as she thought of that music she had heard him play the day before, and of that which she had so longed to make for herself, years ago, with the old barrel organ. She wondered, as she recalled them, how she could ever have so enjoyed the sounds produced by the mysterious turning of that handle. But there had been a deep fascination to her childish mind in that raised recess, closely curtained from the public view, into which the old man had disappeared regularly, Sunday after Sunday, and in the glimpse which she obtained, as she stood on tiptoe on her hassock, through the curtain holes, of what the old man did within.

"You don't want to play barrel-organs now?" said Arthur, smiling. "Mr. Everard is teaching you something better. Did you always love music so much?"

"Yes," answered Hazel, with kindling eyes; "I have been longing to know just a *little* about it for, oh, such a long time. It is *very* good of this gentleman to teach me. I will try to write your music for you as soon as ever I can, sir!" she added eagerly, turning to Mr. Everard. "Will it be very long before I am able to do it?"

"I think not," said Mr. Everard. "You are a good

pupil. Will you come again on Monday? You may study your little book, and write as many notes as you like to-morrow, by way of preparation. How does she write them, Mr. Miller? I cannot judge of that part of her work."

"She is taking great pains," said Arthur, taking up Hazel's sheet of music-paper. "I can see that she is a good pupil, and that she must have worked hard after her first lesson yesterday."

Hazel's face brightened at his praise of her carefully-done work, and bidding good night respectfully to Mr. Everard and himself, she hurried down to the beach in a very happy frame of mind.





CHAPTER VIII.

"He was gentle, but unfortunate,
Dishonestly afflicted, but yet honest,"

—*Cymbeline.*

"**Y**OU have seen my pupil before?" said Mr. Everard, when Hazel had gone. "Do you know anything of her?"

Arthur explained about their childish meeting on the sands years ago, and that he had not seen her since, until the previous afternoon, in St. Mary's Church, when he had not recognised her as "the little princess in disguise."

"Does she look like that still?" said Mr. Everard. "I am very much interested in the poor child. She puzzles me by her total difference in mind to the people of her class. I have tried to draw her out during our lessons yesterday and to-day, and I am surprised at her intelligence and refinement. Does she show the same characteristics in her face?"

"Yes," answered Arthur; and he told Mr. Everard of his own astonishment on the previous day, when Hazel had told him who she was, and of the interesting half-hour they had spent together.

"She is a strange girl," said Mr. Everard. "I don't approve of raising people from their natural station, by teaching them things which are only likely to unfit them, as

a rule, for the work in life to which they are born; but with regard to this child, I feel sure that I can do no harm by helping her to a little of the knowledge she craves for. She is utterly unlike her own people, and I feel disposed to make her happy if I can, poor child, and leave the future in God's hands."

"She is an anomaly," said Arthur, smiling. "I am glad you are so kind to her; and I hope your work will result satisfactorily, both to yourself and your pupil. But about your music—she will not be able just yet to write it out for you. If you have anything particular which you are anxious to have written out, let me have the pleasure of doing it for you. My evenings after dark are free, and I shall be here till next Wednesday, probably. In three or four evenings I could, perhaps, do all you want till your amanuensis is ready for your *next* compositions."

Mr. Everard hesitated.

"It is not fair to employ so much of your time without paying for it," he said; "and I am very poor. My life is somewhat of a struggle."

"Do not mention payment," said Arthur. "It would be a great pleasure to me to help you, and would be a charity on *your* part instead of on mine; for if I am not with you I must spend my evenings alone, which is a trial to one of my sociable disposition. I shall be engaged on Tuesday evening, but I have three evenings free, and will come to-night, if you will allow me, in an hour or so."

Mr. Everard's face brightened, and he accepted the offer without further hesitation. His "March" and his "Meditations" had been on his mind a long while; it would be a great relief to have them written out at last, ready for printing. A few former musical publications of his had met with a very good sale, and had helped him from time to time to eke out his small means. He would be so glad of a little extra money to help him through the winter! He

was not strong, and his room was often very cold. His salary as organist would only buy him the barest necessities, and he had no friend to help him. Nobody knew the poor blind organist's struggles, and those who were amused at his shabby clothes, and wondered why he did not get better ones, forgot that the reason might be that he *could* not. And they did not know that there *had* been a time when Mr. Everard had wanted for nothing—when he had been able to enjoy all the comforts which money could buy—and that, therefore, his present poverty, which he bore so uncomplainingly, was all the harder to him.

Arthur Thursfield, however, knowing also the difficulty of making ends meet, after he had laid aside for a special and urgent purpose all he could spare out of *his* salary, understood Mr. Everard's troubles at a glance, and without need of explanation; and thought that if he *could* be of any help to the blind musician, he *would*. After consulting about the business, which he had almost forgotten, he hurried back to St. Philip's, arranged the next day's work, and dismissed the men, as it was too dark to work any longer, and then went to his lodgings for tea and half-an-hour's rest. The remainder of the evening was spent by him and Mr. Everard over the "Meditations"—and it was a very interesting evening to both the old and the young musician. The blind man's Twilight Talks to his little organ were very beautiful and well worthy of publication, and Arthur promised to recommend them to all his organist friends in London when they came out. By working hard the "March" also was committed to paper by ten o'clock on the following Monday evening, and Arthur surveyed his work with satisfaction, while Mr. Everard's gratitude alone was worth working for, he thought.

"Your work will be finished to-morrow, then?" said Mr. Everard, as he and Arthur drew their chairs round the fire for a few minutes' chat before the latter took his leave.

"Yes," he answered; "and we shall be off on Wednesday morning. We have done our best for your old organ, Mr. Everard, and I think you will enjoy playing on it a little better than you *have* done; but you ought to be at St. Mary's. The man they have there isn't up to much, and it's a splendid organ—too good for him. Why didn't you try and get the appointment when the last organist died?"

"I did," said Mr. Everard, with a sigh; "but they preferred a younger man, and one who could *see*. I am getting on in years now, Mr. Miller, and they thought I did not look strong, and had better stay quietly where I was, I suppose. I was disappointed, for I should have been glad of the appointment; it is better in every respect than mine, and I think I could have done all that they require; but it can't be helped. I have got used to disappointments, Mr. Miller."

He smiled, but there was a sad, worn look on his patient face, and Arthur fancied he saw tears come into the sightless eyes.

"Well, it was too bad, I think," said Arthur. "I wish I had been here, and I'd have voted for you pretty strongly! Mr. Reynolds isn't fit to hold a candle to *you*; I wonder nobody could see that."

"I must not grudge him his position," said Mr. Everard. "Mr. Stuart, the vicar, is satisfied with him, I believe. Perhaps I should have been a cause of anxiety to him on account of my blindness. He is a kind-hearted, pleasant man, but very nervous, and I daresay he would have been in constant terror of my breaking down. You are more critical in your musical tastes than the Pointhaven people, my young friend. Mr. Reynolds is considered a very good organist here."

"My point is that you are a better one," answered Arthur, laughing, "and I wish I lived here, that I might

convince everyone of the fact. Never mind, Mr. Everard, you will be famous yet. I am going to spread the fame of your compositions far and wide."

"Your zeal on my behalf is very kind," said Mr. Everard, with a smile. "When I was young I had some ambition for fame, I confess. But troubles came—I have had a good many troubles, Mr. Miller—and those who would have rejoiced in my fame have been taken from me. And when I became blind, I was obliged to give up my early hopes, and struggle on as best I could. Troubles take the spirit and strength out of one, when they come one upon another, like mine; but I hope I am patient now. I have not always been so—it seemed hard to lose all—but God knew best."

"I am so sorry for you," said Arthur, compassionately. "I wonder why the lives of some are so much harder than those of others!" he added, half to himself.

"God knows," said Mr. Everard. "We shall know some day, perhaps. I have many a time wondered that same thing, but I have been obliged to give it up, and leave it to Him. You have your troubles too, then, Mr. Miller? I cannot *see* people, you know, but I have learned to judge pretty well of them by other things—and I have thought to myself, while you and I have talked together the last few evenings, that if you had not some trouble to bear, you would not be here mending my organ."

"No," said Arthur, candidly, "I should not. Mr. Everard," he added in an excited tone, after some moments' pause, "you spoke of losing those you loved. I wonder sometimes if it is not better to lose a friend—a parent, or a brother, or sister, we will say—by death, than to have one *living*, whom—whom you are ashamed of—one whose name you can never mention to your friends, for fear of their finding out what you wish to conceal; one you *must* love, because of your relationship, but cannot honour, or take

any pleasure in thinking of—one for whom you work hard, and who never gives you any thanks for it !”

“Ah ! I cannot tell,” said Mr. Everard ; “that is a hard case, truly. My poor fellow !” and he laid his hand on Arthur’s arm with a kind touch, which told that he both understood, and felt for his young companion.

Arthur did not say any more on the subject ; he did not yet know Mr. Everard well enough to enter into the full particulars of his trouble to him, but he felt that his blind friend understood him sufficiently well, to give him that sympathy for which he often longed, and which he felt none the less for its being silently spoken. And he was grateful to him for the delicacy of feeling which prevented his asking many questions.

“You will come and see me on Wednesday, if possible, before you leave ?” said Mr. Everard, as Arthur rose from his seat, after a few minutes’ silence, and wished him good night. “I had a most interesting afternoon with my pupil to-day. She has an inquiring mind after many subjects besides music, and we shall vary our studies occasionally. She interests me more and more, poor child !”

“It is good of you to take pity on her,” said Arthur. “I can fancy she would be an interesting companion to any one she would talk to. Yes, I will look in early on Wednesday morning. You will send off your music to the publishers to-morrow ? I wish it all success.”

“Thank you,” said Mr. Everard, gratefully. “My pupil was a little disappointed, I think, to find that someone else had done *her* work !”

“I expect there will be plenty more ready for her by the time *she* is ready,” said Arthur. “I shall look out for your next compositions before long ; I believe you have them now at your fingers’ ends !”

“Poor man !” he said to himself, as he walked back to his lodgings, through the lighted streets, “he seems awfully

poor. I wonder what all the troubles were that he spoke of? I suppose he has lost his wife and children—perhaps all his money too. He is a clever musician, and ought to be better appreciated. I shall tell Lilian to-morrow night, that she is to get people to be kinder to him. They ought to ask him out and make him happy.”

Arthur opened his window and looked out, when he reached home. His room was quite at the top of the house in which he lodged, and he could see right across the town, and away to sea, where the Perilpoint lights were shining out, like great stars, at the far end of the dim line of rocks. Those lights made him think of that strange girl, the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, and he found himself wondering what sort of father and mother she had, and what sort of life she led in that lonely home; and whether it was out of the stormy sea round those rocks that she had dragged up the netful of strange fancies and ideas which separated her from her people. Her face, with its wistful beauty, and strange mixture of pride and humility, haunted him as he turned from the window and drew down his blind. He would ask Lilian to-morrow if *she* knew anything about her. They had had so many things to talk about during their last interview that he had forgotten her then.

Hazel had been very busy that evening; her pen had been working away very fast over her music-paper, and her father and mother, sitting over the fire, had watched her with alternate discontent and admiration. They had not the heart to forbid her to amuse herself in her own fashion, for she left none of her duties undone, and never sat down to her studies till she had helped her mother with whatever work there was to be done in the house; and Mrs. Manlinson well knew, though Hazel did not complain, that much of this work was very distasteful to her. She took the matter more quietly than her husband. *He* was disturbed in mind at his daughter's fancies—though he indulged her

in every whim—and frequently remarked to his wife, that “he could not understand the bairn, nor why she should turn out so different to her father and mother.” But Mrs. Manlinson’s invariable reply was, that “all folks were not alike, and maybe the child would be none the worsor by-and-by for her ideas,” which did not seem to create the same feeling of astonishment in her mind as in her husband’s, although she, too, grumbled at them occasionally. Manlinson did not want his girl to be above her station, he said; “no good ever came of that, and he was sorry she held her head higher than her neighbours—though, to be sure, she *looked* as much above them as the sky looked above the water.” Mrs. Manlinson was apt to make no reply to these remarks; whatever her thoughts about her daughter might be, she kept them very much to herself, and seemed not to care to talk over the matter with her husband. “The lass is as she was born,” she would say, “and we can’t alter nature;” with which sympathy the lighthouse-keeper was obliged to be content.

To Hazel herself it seemed as if a wonderful change had come over her life in these few days of her acquaintance with the blind organist. At last she had found someone to answer those innumerable questions which had been gathering and multiplying in her brain all through her childhood, and which had sometimes made her feel as if her head would give way with the weight of them. Mr. Everard’s barely-furnished room was to her a palace of delight, and Mr. Everard himself was the prince who kept the keys of its innumerable storehouses, which he would unlock for her, one by one, as fast as she was ready for them. She laid aside her books with a sigh when bed-time came, and, like Arthur Thursfield, stood looking out of her window some minutes, before she thought of going to bed. She always looked out every night at the red light in the water, down far below her window. She had loved that lighted water

ever since she was a little child, when she used to beg her mother to let her go and sail her boats, just in that "pretty red sea." She remembered that once her father had humoured her even in this fancy, and had carried her and her boat down to the foot of the rocks, as near to the red water as he could, and had thrown out her boat for her and let it sail for several minutes, while she, in his arms, held a long string, which he had tied to it for her, so that it might sail as far as possible. She remembered, too, having asked her father that same night if the Red Sea in the Bible was red because there was a lighthouse close by, to make light in the water—an idea which had taken strong possession of her childish mind. And it had been a disappointment to her when her father had answered that he didn't believe there *was* a lighthouse there at all, and that she was "a queer one, and no mistake!"

Thinking of her childhood reminded Hazel again of that happy morning on the sands, spent with the beautiful little boy and girl—though he had been a *big* boy to her then—who had played with her so gently and kindly, in such a different way to the dirty little children, who had been so rough to her, and whom they had driven away. How strange it was that this Mr. Miller should be that very same little boy! She was glad to have found out his name. She wondered whether he cared for the other things which she loved besides music—if he loved the sea, and would care for her beloved lighthouse rocks, and the strange and beautiful things to be found upon them, and if he would take the same pleasure which she took in the lighted water and the dark shadows out beyond. She fancied that he would, and she thought it would be pleasant to talk to him about them. Then she wondered why he had looked sad when he had spoken of his sister—that pretty sister, who had won her deep, childish admiration. She felt sorry for him, and wished he might always have that sister with

him. She wished, too, that she could see her again, and wondered whether she had ever been at Pointhaven since that day long ago.

"Ah, but she is not like me!" said poor Hazel to herself, turning sorrowfully away from the window. "I must not think about her. She would not be my friend. I wish I didn't want to have friends that I *must* not have! Why do I wish to be different to what I am, I wonder? Other girls like to wear fine ribbons and feathers, because they think they make them *look* like ladies—though they don't one bit—but they don't feel as I do; it is only the dress they care about, and I don't mind about that. I don't care to look fine, but I do care about the other things—oh, so much! and nobody can understand! Only Mr. Everard—I think he does. He has made me a great deal happier!"





CHAPTER IX

"My project may deceive me,
But my intents are fixed, and will not leave me."

—*All's Well that ends Well.*

LILIAN and her brother spent two very happy hours together on the following evening, in Lilian's turret-room. She often sat there for an hour or two in the evening to study quietly, so her absence from the drawing-room was not remarked by her aunts as anything unusual. She was interested in Arthur's account of the work he had done for Mr. Everard, and also in hearing about the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, whom she, too, remembered, when Arthur recalled to her mind the pretty little girl on the sands with whom they had played, and who had had the infatuation for the barrel-organ. She had heard of there being a strange girl at the lighthouse, from her friends, the daughters of the rector of St. Mary's; but they had given her the idea that she was a girl rather to be avoided—one who had run away from school, and defied all attempts to bring her back—and who had the character of being haughty and wilful, and completely spoilt by over-indulgent parents. Not that the rector's daughters had ever seen her—for Perilpoint was not in their parish—but this was what they had heard of her from the Ropers, who, being

elderly, and unable to visit the lighthouse people in their somewhat inaccessible dwelling, had heard it from somebody else.

"I should think that story is obsolete," said Arthur, laughing, "the original source of it appearing to be somewhat remote, if not altogether lost. It is time for a new report to take its place; you had better visit the lighthouse, Lilian, and start one!"

"I will, some day," said Lilian. "I feel curious to see this wonderful girl, who seems to have struck both you and Mr. Everard as something quite uncommon."

"Well, that is what she is," said Arthur, "or I should not have felt any interest in her. Lily, I must be off. I have been here just two hours, and the aunts will be coming up presently to see what you are about. You can tell them you have been engrossed in the study of human nature."

"In the form of what?" asked Lilian, laughing. "The ghost, shall I say? Oh, they won't say anything. I often sit up here as long as this, but I am afraid it *would* be safer for you not to stay much longer. When will you be here again?"

"I don't know," he answered. "If no business calls me here I'll manage to get down in the summer, when I have my holiday, on purpose to see you. Perhaps Aunt Winifred's heart will soften towards me before that time. Oh, Lily, I often think our fate is very hard. My only comfort is that *you* have this pretty home, and that you have Aunt Evelyn to take your part in your defence of me. Though she doesn't say it to Aunt Winifred, I know what she *thinks* about it."

"If I couldn't talk to her about you," said Lilian, her eyes filling with tears, "I couldn't stay here at all. I couldn't bear it. All Aunt Winifred's kindness to *me* wouldn't make me stay if I hadn't Aunt Evelyn to be kind

to you. I can never mention your name to Aunt Winifred without getting a long lecture. It is so hard to bear sometimes, Arthur. It is only the feeling so sure that we are doing right, and what mother would have wished us to do, that helps me to bear it."

"Our first duty is to *him*," said Arthur, gravely; "and I believe that in the sight of God we ought to help him. I could not have done so if I had followed out Aunt Winifred's plans; and though, even now, it will take me a long time, I am making a beginning. You are a brave little sister to help me, by being so willing to bear all these disagreeables."

"It isn't all disagreeables, you know," said Lilian, cheerfully. "The worst of them is that you can't share my comforts and my pleasures. Look here, Arthur, see what Aunt Evelyn gave me for you the other day," and she took from her drawer the purse containing her aunt's gift.

"How jolly of her!" exclaimed Arthur, warmly. "I wish I could see her and thank her. But you must do it for me. He ought to be grateful for this," he added, with a sigh.

"He will be grateful some day," said Lilian. "I am sure of it, dear Arthur. When you have succeeded in your work, and he is free, he will feel what you have done for him, and perhaps he will be quite different. Perhaps we shall be quite happy all together some day. Oh, Arthur, wouldn't it be delightful?"

"I pray that it may be some day," said Arthur, huskily, putting his arm round Lilian, as she burst into tears. "Come, Waterlily, I don't want to leave you floating on a lake of your own tears."

At which Lilian looked up with a smile, but she thought there were tears in his eyes too, and could not for a few moments stop her own. The sound of a door opening down stairs, however, made her dry them hastily; and Arthur,

bidding her farewell, hurried down the turret staircase. Lilian had time to let him out, and hear him whisper "All right" from the other side of the "Jungle" wall, and get back to her own room, locking the door of the staircase securely behind her, before her Aunt Evelyn entered.

"I came to see what you were about, my love," she said. "It is just time for prayers, and your Aunt Winifred has been wishing to hear your last new piece to-night."

"I will play it after supper," said Lilian. "I was coming down in a few minutes, but I am quite ready now," and she followed her aunt to the drawing-room.

"Lilian," said Miss Raymond, as she came in, "I met Mrs. Roper in the town this afternoon, and heard from her that the organ was to be finished to-day, and that the workmen leave Pointhaven to-morrow morning. Your Aunt Evelyn says that she will accompany you there early in the morning, if you have a particular wish to see your brother again. You may go and bid him good-bye if you know where he lodges, and will do it quietly. It is very unpleasant to be forced to avoid the notice of those among whom we live, but as your aunt has undertaken to manage the matter for you, I allow you this once to go."

If Lilian's eager thanks could reward her aunt's magnanimity it was rewarded to the full; but Miss Winifred received them in dignified silence, and did not allude to the subject again. Lilian had at the last taken such a very hurried leave of her brother, that she was delighted at the prospect of seeing him again in the morning. It might be months before she could have another opportunity of seeing him, so that even two *partings*, sad though it was to part, were better than one. The evening was a happier one than she had had any idea it could be, when she had followed Miss Evelyn downstairs, feeling very desolate at the loss of her brother.

Miss Evelyn managed very skilfully next day to procure

an interview of a few minutes with Arthur at his lodgings, without exciting any curiosity in the mind of his landlady ; and Arthur was very glad to see her, as well as his sister, and to give her his own thanks for the kind gift received through Lilian the night before. Miss Evelyn fortunately made no awkward inquiries as to how he had obtained it, taking it for granted that her niece had sent the notes through the post. Arthur had already paid his farewell call on Mr. Everard, and took the opportunity of impressing upon Lilian and his aunt the fact that he was not properly treated at Pointhaven, and might be much happier if people would show him a little kindness, by visiting him and asking him to their houses sometimes, which must be suggested to them on the first opportunity. And Lilian walked home, resolved to obey Arthur's injunctions in that, as in all other matters, and at anyrate to do what she could for the happiness of the poor blind organist.

"Has your brother gone?" inquired her Aunt Winifred, sternly, as Lilian drew her chair to the fire on her return home, and busied herself with some needlework—the only occupation to which she could settle, while her mind was full of Arthur.

"He was going to the station directly after we left him," answered Lilian, with slightly quivering lips; "he has started by this time."

"I am glad of it," returned her aunt. "I can only hope that Pointhaven will not require Arthur Thursfield's services again! Lilian, you are a good girl; do not let me see you fret yourself about your unworthy brother."

"It is not only Arthur, Aunt Winifred," said Lilian, her tears falling down upon her work as she spoke; "I cannot help thinking and being troubled about—about——"

The tears came fast, and she could not go on. Her aunt moved somewhat impatiently in her chair.

"Your feelings are very right and proper, no doubt, my

dear Lilian," she said; "but you must not give way to them, for feelings are apt to lead astray. In this case they are simply wasted. I tell you, Lilian, as I have in vain told Arthur, that I know better about the matter than you do. I know by experience that *some* people will never be the better for whatever you may do for them. You may 'break your back to heal their finger,' and they will not say 'thank you'—and it is so now. Arthur is 'breaking his back' for one of whom he cannot even say, 'I love and honour him.'"

"He loves him, Aunt Winnie," said Lilian, in a low voice, full of pain, "and so do I. If we can help him it is our duty to do it, without looking on into the future to consider whether our help will be valued or not—or even whether it will have the effect we hope for. We can only wait to know that, but we can *hope*, Aunt Winifred, and we can have faith."

"You will not move me," said Miss Raymond. "I am convinced that it is a hopeless and a thankless task; and, in my opinion, it is better that a man who cannot take honest care of himself should remain where he can do no mischief, than that he should be free to injure more than he has already injured. I am equally convinced that Arthur is not to be turned from his purpose."

"He is not, Aunt Winifred," said Lilian, firmly, though gently; "no one will turn him from it."

"And therefore," continued Miss Raymond, "Arthur and I must remain strangers. By-and-by, when he has learnt by experience the folly of his romantic ideas, he will remember my warnings, and be sorry that he refused to heed them. But men are as obstinate and self-willed as the veriest mules, and as little to be trusted as the winds. You will find it so one day, Lilian, if you ever put your faith in one of them, though you do not believe me now, perhaps. I am thankful to be beholden to none of them.

That is a pretty piece of work of yours, Lilian ; let me see it."

And Arthur's name was not mentioned again by Miss Raymond. Lilian received a note the next day telling her of his arrival in London, which fact she communicated at dinner-time, but her Aunt Evelyn only showed any interest in the matter. Miss Winifred sat bolt upright on her chair, stiff and stately as an empress, and looked straight before her, out of the window, with an impassive face, which showed no sign that she had even heard her niece's words.





CHAPTER X.

"My mind misgave me : his clothes made a false report of him."

—*Timon of Athens.*

"And give to dust that is a little gilt
More laud than gilt o'er dusted."

—*Troilus and Cressida.*

IT was a cosy-looking party gathered round the drawing-room fire in the twilight at St. Mary's Rectory one cold, late November afternoon. Outside a chilly fog made the town look very miserable, and poor little ill-clad children might be heard crying with cold as they still lingered about the streets. Not a glimpse of the sea could be seen through the thick white veil which hung over it, and the rectory party had shut out the cheerless outside world with shutters and warm crimson curtains, and had drawn their chairs and stools as near to their own blazing fire as possible.

The rector had just come in tired from a long round of visiting, and in his arm-chair at one corner of the fireside had been lulled into a comfortable nap by the warmth of his bright fire and the subdued voices of his half-dozen children. Two little boys were roasting chestnuts on the hot bars, and glanced up apologetically at their elder sisters, when the loud pop, which announced their perfection, made their father half open his eyes, and the sisters frown at

the chestnut lovers for disturbing him. The rector's wife sat in the opposite corner, with a sleeping baby in her lap, and a four-year-old daughter, still rather jealous of the last comer's privileges, clinging to her dress, as she sat on a stool at her feet. The whole family always spent this pleasant twilight half-hour together, however different their occupations might be during the day—the little ones from the nursery, and the rector from his study or his parish, and all agreed in thinking it almost, if not quite, the pleasantest part of the day, even though *some* members of the family might spend it in napping!

"Did you find Lilian at home this afternoon, Constance?" inquired Mrs. Stuart; "and will she help us with our concert, do you think?"

"Yes, she was at home," answered Constance, a pleasant-looking, though not pretty girl, of about twenty. "We stayed a nice long time with her, and luckily Miss Raymond was out."

"We're rather afraid of *her*, you know, mamma," put in Katie, a bright-eyed, vivacious-looking damsel, two years younger than her sister; "she says such sharp things sometimes, and takes one up so quickly, I am afraid to open my mouth when she is in the room. Now I quite love Miss Evelyn! I am sure she has had a disappointment; she looks just like people of that sort."

"You are so silly, Katie," said Constance reprovingly; "you are always thinking about things of that sort. I don't believe Miss Evelyn would like you to talk about such things."

"Why not?" said Katie. "I shouldn't anywhere else but here, and I think so, really. She wears the most lovely mourning ring——"

"Lilian is rather nervous about the concert, mamma," said Constance. "She has never performed in public, she says, and she is a little afraid of undertaking anything."

But I think we shall persuade her ; she has a lovely voice, and plays much better than either of us do."

"She is a nice girl," said Katie. "I'm glad they took the Tower last January. I wish they were in our parish."

"You shouldn't wish that," said Mrs. Stuart, "for the Ropers' find the Miss Raymonds a great help to them in their poor parish, and we are better off for help than they are. And you can see just as much of Lilian as it is. Poor child ! I should think she sometimes feels dull in that lonely, rambling old house ; I fancied she did not look very bright when I met her at the Ropers' last week."

"I believe," said Katie, impressively, "that there is a *secret* somewhere. People who live in those ghostly old houses always have a secret—a haunted chamber, or some romantic relation who gives them trouble. You needn't laugh, Constance ! you are such a sober old thing, you never imagine anything ; but I shall get it out of Lilian some day."

"You must not be inquisitive, Katie," said Mrs. Stuart, "you let your tongue run away with you, sometimes. If there *is* anything of the sort, Lilian would be sure to tell you without your asking, if she wished it known. You must not vex her by asking questions about what is purely your own imagination."

"She doesn't mean it, mamma," said Constance ; "you must not believe half Katie says. Oh, Robbie ! you must not make so much noise with your chestnuts."

Robbie glanced at his father, but seeing his eyes fast closed, put fresh chestnuts on the bar unscrupulously.

"I won't let them pop so loud this time," he said ; "you shall have this lovely one, mamma."

Mrs. Stuart accepted the gift with thanks.

"Did you tell Lilian about the organ recital next Saturday, Constance ?" she asked.

"Yes, I didn't forget that," answered Constance; "but Lilian knew it already. She has been picking up an acquaintance with poor Mr. Everard, and is going to have organ lessons from him this winter."

"I should think he will be glad," said Mrs. Stuart; "it will be a little help to him, poor man. I have felt rather sorry sometimes that we did not engage him when he applied for our organistship; but papa felt nervous about it, owing to his blindness, and I believe he would have been in a continual fidget."

"I'm sure Mr. Reynolds is much nicer," said Katie, who was rather too much inclined to regard everything at St. Mary's as perfection. "Mr. Everard is dreadfully shabby! Somebody really ought to tell him so, mamma, for of course he can't see how he looks, himself, and he does wear *such* things!"

"Perhaps he cannot help it, Katie," said Mrs. Stuart; "I believe he is very poor."

"Mamma," said Constance, "Katie ought not to laugh at him. Lilian says he is very nice and very clever, and he can't help being so poor, I suppose. She says she thinks people ought to try and make him happy; no one has ever shown him very much kindness since he came, and Lilian says he has had troubles."

"You know, my dear," answered the mother, rather hesitatingly, "Dr. Kirby told us, when first Mr. Everard came, that there was a report of his having been very extravagant and careless about money matters, and that he had reduced himself to his present poverty—so that we have all rather held back from having much to do with him. One likes to be sure that people are quite respectable——"

"Dr. Kirby wasn't *sure* about it, though, mamma," said Constance. "He said it was a report, and there are so many reports about things."

"There speaks our wise elder sister," said Katie, saucily. "Well, mamma, Lilian has been teasing Mrs. Roper till she has promised to ask Mr. Everard to spend Christmas Day at the Vicarage, and Lilian is determined to have him—shabby clothes and all—at her Christmas party the night before."

"Lilian is a kind-hearted girl," said Mrs. Stuart, "and I hope he will go, poor man; I daresay it will do him good. I will talk to your father about him. Perhaps we *did* all believe the reports we heard rather too readily."

"What reports?" asked the rector, stretching himself. "What are you all talking about?"

"A report that you have been asleep, papa," said Katie, mischievously. "We have been talking about our visit to the Tower this afternoon, and Mr. Everard, and a great many interesting things. It is a pity you lost them!"

"There is the tea-bell," said Mr. Stuart, "so you may give me the benefit of them at the tea-table. Are you going to have your carol practice to-night, Constance?"

"Yes, papa," answered Constance; "the choir are to come at seven. Just look at Robbie and Alfred's black fingers, mamma!"

The two chestnut-roasters decamped immediately to make themselves more presentable, and the others went to the dining-room; Constance, having heard a well-known ring at the door-bell, stopping behind in the hall to admit the Rev. Francis Winterton, her father's curate, and *her* promised husband. He was a tall, strongly-built young man, of about seven-and-twenty, and his good-humoured, free and pleasant manners had made him a welcome visitor at the Rectory, as well as among the parishioners. He possessed, among many other good qualities, a stentorian bass voice, which was a great service in the choir, and on the

help of which Constance greatly relied for the success of her carol practice ; for the business of teaching the carols, which were reckoned a very important feature in the parish Christmas festivities at St. Mary's, devolved this year upon Constance, Mr. Reynolds, the new organist, not looking upon *that* work as any part of his duty, and being not fond of extra work in general. And Constance, rather nervous at the prospect of instructing a choir of a good many members, each imbued with a strong sense of his own correct and faultless mode of singing, was glad to have her substantial lover to lean upon.

Constance was a very good, though not particularly clever girl ; she had a calm, equable temperament, and had walked into love as quietly as she had just walked out of the drawing-room. Nevertheless, her love was none the less sincere and strong, and it was fully appreciated and returned by Mr. Winterton, who was not himself of a nature to require brilliant qualities in his wife, and who felt at times rather overwhelmed by the vivacity and perpetual chatter of Constance's younger sister. Katie had her father's nervous, restless, imaginative nature, with a much greater amount of animal spirits, and was like a piece of mercury, never still, and never silent for a longer time than she could possibly help. She was very fond of teasing her quieter, more sober sister ; but the two were great friends, in spite of their different characters, and Constance had much more influence over her than was generally imagined. Constance had been engaged six months, and her marriage was not to take place for the present. The existing state of affairs, however, was very pleasant, and she was in no hurry to leave her home, where Mr. Winterton was free to come and go just as often as he pleased—a privilege which he naturally made good use of. A sister, three years younger than Katie, had died some years since, and another one, twelve years of age, was at a boarding-school ; a round,

rosy, romping school-girl she was, which characteristics had obtained for her the nickname of "The three R.'s"—otherwise a most inappropriate name, the proverbial three, as well as all other studies, being disliked by the young lady most cordially. Robbie and Alfred, aged eight and seven, were taught by Constance and Katie, though Constance did the larger share of the teaching, Katie's help being chiefly nominal. These, with little Helen and the baby, completed the family circle.

"Well," said Mr. Stuart, when they had all gathered round the tea-table, "what was the knotty point under discussion just now, Katie? *your* voice broke in upon my dreams pretty often."

"I am sorry if I spoilt them, papa," said Katie, "but we were talking of how far it is right to judge of a man by his clothes."

"Well, if it is true that 'clothes make the man,'" said Mr. Stuart, "I am afraid our opinions may not be always correct, and in some cases might not be very charitable. At what conclusion did you arrive on such a weighty matter?"

"Oh, we had not got so far as the 'conclusion,'" said Katie, "we were only discussing people's opinions on the subject. Frank, what have you to say about it?"

"I don't know," answered Mr. Winterton, with a smile, "I have not considered the matter sufficiently. And I should not like to compromise myself, without having any idea who the particular person under discussion may be."

"I agree with Lilian Thursfield," said Constance, "that *faces* are fairer things to judge by than clothes."

"Is that Miss Thursfield's theory?" said Mr. Winterton. "Well, I remember a young fellow, whom I have seen lately—about a month ago—whose face and general appearance struck me as being of a higher order than his clothes. The clothes were very dusty, but my impression

of the *man* was that he possessed a remarkably clear understanding of things in general, and a noble mind."

"In fact a mind unclouded by dust," put in Katie.

"Do you refer to young Miller?" asked Mrs. Stuart. "His face and manner struck me too; I was quite interested in him."

"Yes, Miller is the man I mean," answered the curate; "I had a chat with him once or twice, and liked him immensely."

"Oh, I remember," said Katie. "But the person *we* meant is Mr. Everard. Papa, Lilian thinks that everybody behaves very badly to Mr. Everard, and that he is ten times better and cleverer than Mr. Reynolds. Now I am sure Mr. Reynolds's dress is always perfection, and you know how untidy Mr. Everard always looks; but Lilian thinks he is a broken diamond, and Mr. Reynolds a painted piece of glass."

"She didn't say just that, you know, papa," said Constance, not wishing Lilian's confidences to give offence.

"She meant it, though, I know," said Katie, "and we nearly quarrelled about it, because I stood up for Mr. Reynolds, and Lilian *won't* be persuaded to like him. I told her she was prejudiced, because he is *our* organist, and she declared she was not."

"Does she know much of Mr. Everard?" inquired Mr. Stuart. "I fancied not."

"Only just lately," answered Constance. "She has been to see him about organ lessons, and has taken a fancy to him. You know, Katie, I think what she said about Mr. Reynolds is a little true. He *does* think about his dress a good deal, and he often makes me cross by the way he is always turning that fine ring of his about when one is speaking to him."

Mr. Winterton laughed.

"He does give himself airs," he said; "and I don't

think, Mrs. Stuart, that he is very reverent. He looks upon his work as something to be done for so much money, and I am afraid that is all."

"Do you think so?" said the rector. "Well, you are the best judge, for as I leave you to manage the music with him you know him better than I do. But I am sorry if that is the case."

"You are all turning round against poor Mr. Reynolds now," said Katie. "I wish now I had not told you what Lilian said. I mean to stand up for him."

"Very well," said Mr. Stuart, smiling. "I have no immediate thoughts of dismissing him, my dear. But come, where is the conclusion at which we were all to arrive after this discussion about dust or no dust?"

"It has been lost sight of, I think," said Mrs. Stuart. "One conclusion, I think, is, that we must all be careful, Katie in particular, not to judge too much from appearances."

"And another," said Mr. Winterton, "that my own particular ideas about our organist were not intended for any other ears than those present; also, that I did not intend to hurt Katie's feelings by suggesting that the qualities of his mind do not correspond with those of his clothes!"

"He is like my teaspoon, perhaps," remarked Robbie, as he carefully balanced that article upon the edge of his cup; "there's a lot of the silver rubbed off, mamma."

Which practical conclusion of the matter raised a shout of laughter, and a reproving reply from his mother, that such teaspoons were considered good enough for little boys.

"The *real* conclusion is," said Constance, when the laugh had subsided, and Katie's indignation had cooled down, "that we are all to try and make poor blind Mr. Everard happier, if we can, by taking more notice of him,

and looking upon him as a *gentleman*, which he is, instead of a *nobody*. That is what Lilian says."

"I don't know if diamonds can be mended," said Katie, doubtfully, "but I like Lilian Thursfield, and I always thought Mr. Everard had an interesting look. Blind people always have. At any rate I hope his organ recitals will succeed better than they did last year, and I will try not to look so much at his clothes any more—if only Robbie will promise not to call Mr. Reynolds a teaspoon."





CHAPTER XI.

"I beseech you, be better known to this gentleman, whom I commend to you as a noble friend of mine. How worthy he is, I will leave to appear hereafter."
—*Cymbeline*.

THE first organ recital that winter succeeded better than Mr. Everard had expected, from past experience, and when he appeared in the Tower drawing-room, on Christmas Eve, Katie Stuart, one of the guests at Lilian's much-talked-of party, remarked to Constance, in a whisper, that there was no fault to be found with his dress *this* time—for he had actually purchased a new suit of clothes at last, which, in her opinion, made a wonderful difference in his appearance; in fact Katie was quite ready, this evening, to agree with Lilian, that the much-neglected blind gentleman had a more interesting face, and more striking general appearance than old General Fortescue himself, who lived in the largest house in Seaview Crescent, which was the most aristocratic part of the town—and who was considered by the Point-haven people generally as a model of perfection in every respect. People visited General Fortescue, and wondered, on their return home, if it would be *very* expensive to furnish their drawing-rooms like his, and whether the particular style of cap worn by old Mrs. Fortescue might be

imitated without the fact being too much noticed ; and regretted that the style of the General's dinner-parties might be just a *little* too magnificent for them to attempt with good taste. A new-comer, taking a house in Seaview Crescent for a few weeks during the summer, was envied for his proximity to the Indian nabob's mansion, and if he attained to terms of any intimacy with the members of that worshipped household during his stay, was quite disliked by some of Pointhaven's humbler residents, who had hopelessly aspired to that honour. Even Katie Stuart was not without a secret feeling of pride in the fact that General Fortescue's residence was in *her* father's parish. For Katie was naturally rather inclined to be carried away by outward show, without stopping to look whether there was much beneath or not—which tendency her parents and elder sister strove, to the best of their power, to remove. The General and his family, however, were not present this evening to excite either envy or admiration from the party assembled.

Miss Winifred Raymond was in the habit of walking through the magnificent drawing-room at Seaview House, when she returned Mrs. Fortescue's occasional calls, with as stately and independent a step as she trod in her own apartments, and she made no attempt to improve her acquaintance with the "highest family" in Pointhaven. The General, with all his dignified presence, was "only a man," and Miss Raymond did not scorn him less than the rest of mankind. She could put up with a few members of the despised race occasionally, when the calls of society rendered it necessary, and she had consented to take up Mr. Everard's cause, after much persuasion, to please Lilian, and having done so, felt a certain amount of gratification at its being *her* house at which the poor blind organist should make his *début* as a recognised and respected member of Pointhaven society. Lilian had been

obliged to use all her persuasive powers to induce him to come and meet a few friends, in a quiet way, at her aunt's house on Christmas Eve. He had been thrown back upon himself so long, that he had grown exclusive, and had come to feel that he should be out of place at an evening party. His blindness had not made him feel so until the last few years, when his increased poverty, in addition to his great affliction, had caused him to live a hidden, neglected life, among the people with whom he had come to dwell. In those few years he had tried to bury the recollection of his earlier days, when he had been sought after by a large circle of friends, and when his musical genius had made him everywhere a welcome and specially appreciated guest. He had felt the difference very bitterly at first, but now he had grown so accustomed to it, that it required an effort to break through his acquired solitary habits, and meet society again. But Lilian had begged so earnestly that he would come to her Christmas party—*hers* especially, because her aunts had given her permission to invite just whom she pleased, on that particular night—that he had at length given a half-reluctant, half-pleased consent. Lilian, like his first pupil, Hazel, reminded him of his lost little daughter, and he would not refuse her pleading request ; and when she came forward to meet him in the hall with a warm welcome, and led him, herself, into the drawing-room, where he would *feel* the pleasant glow of lamp and firelight, and hear the cheerful buzz of voices, and introduced him to one or two people whom he did not know, before gently placing him in the most comfortable arm-chair by the fireside, he felt glad that he had come, instead of spending another long, lonely Christmas Eve in his own cheerless little parlour.

“Now you are comfortable,” said Lilian, gaily, “and you are to sit here and get warm, after your cold walk, till tea is ready, and are not to get up to speak to any one. Your

boy will have a merry Christmas Eve with the servants ; I have told them to make him happy."

"You are very kind, Miss Lilian," said Mr. Everard. "But you must not stay here talking to a blind old man while your young companions are wishing to have you amongst them. You have made me so comfortable here, that I shall find my own thoughts better company than they have been for some long time. Do I know your friends ? I hear familiar voices, I think."

"Here are Mr. and Mrs. Roper coming to talk to you," said Lilian. "The Stuarts are here too ; you know a little of them, don't you ? And there are Mrs. Argyle and her son and daughter—the Doctor is coming by-and-bye. And Mr. Winterton is with the Stuarts. And the people I introduced to you just now—the Carlises—are from Marston's Ferry ; Major Carlisle plays the flute beautifully. I asked his daughters to be sure and make him come, because I was going to have a particular friend at my party who would enjoy hearing him play. For I know you will, Mr. Everard."

"You do me too much honour, Miss Raymond," said Mr. Everard, with a pleased smile, "in considering your old organ-master already as a 'particular friend.'"

"I have heard that people always think most of their *newest* friend," said Lilian, "and you are *my* newest. But, Mr. Everard, my name isn't Raymond."

"I beg your pardon," he said. "Your aunt, Miss Raymond, in speaking to me of your lessons, did not mention your name as far as I recollect ; she spoke of you only as 'her niece.' I discovered your Christian name by hearing her speak of you to her sister ; the other I rashly concluded to be the same as her own."

"Mine is Thursfield," said Lilian. "You called me 'Miss Raymond' at my last lesson, and I meant to tell you at that time, but I forgot again before you had

finished speaking. My two aunts are my mother's sisters."

"And your name, then, is Thursfield?" said Mr. Everard, as if he had not quite understood.

"Yes," answered Lilian, wondering at the rather peculiar expression which came over his face as he raised his blind eyes to *her* face, as though vainly endeavouring to see it.

"I wish, sometimes, that I could see people," he said, at length. "I want to see you, my kind little friend. I can form a pretty good idea of people from other things, but—I wonder if you ever thank God for your sight, Miss Lilian?"

"I don't think I have ever done so," said Lilian, soberly. "Oh, Mr. Everard, I wish you could see! Is it very long since——"

But her question, rather timidly begun, was interrupted by old Mr. Roper's voice asking kindly after Mr. Everard's health, and she left her blind guest, and returned to the younger ones at the other end of the room. She came back to him, however, when tea was announced, and led him herself to the tea-room, giving him a seat next her own, and waiting upon him with an unobtrusive care, which much added to his comfort. Following her example, others gradually forgot their prejudices, and during the course of the evening most of the company found their opinion of the blind organist decidedly changing.

"Really, he is a most interesting man!" observed Mrs. Argyle to Mrs. Roper, in a confidential whisper, "and quite aristocratic-looking now he is well-dressed. I shouldn't wonder, now, if he had once moved quite in the higher circles."

"I have always felt an interest in him," said Mrs. Roper, "but I must own that the report we heard soon after his arrival has caused us rather to hold aloof from him."

"About his extravagance, you mean?" said Mrs. Argyle, shaking her head. "Ah, poor man! if that is true, you may depend he suffers for it now. But you and Mr. Roper have been very kind to him, I am sure."

Mrs. Roper's placid, good-natured face looked a little troubled.

"We have certainly not meant to be anything else," she said, "but I begin to think that we *might* have taken more notice of him, and helped him to make friends. It was our place to do it, you see, and——well, we must try to make amends now. I think if the poor man *has* done wrong, and brought himself to poverty, he has repented of it. He is a good man, I feel sure, as I see more of him."

"He is going to play to us," said Mrs. Argyle, settling herself back in her chair comfortably to listen; and the conversation ceased while Mr. Everard, led to the piano by his guide Lilian, played the "Moonlight Sonata," and played it so exquisitely, that not one word was spoken by any of the company till he had finished.

"*That's* playing!" said Major Carlisle to Mr. Stuart, when the blind musician had regained his seat amid enthusiastic expressions of delight. "Who is this Mr. Everard? How is it I have never heard of him before?"

Mr. Stuart was a little embarrassed in explaining that he really knew very little of him himself, in spite of his five years' residence in Pointhaven.

"Ah, you are an unmusical set!" said the Major. "You always were in Pointhaven, and you don't even let Marston's Ferry hear of your organ recitals, which must be worth hearing, I am sure. You'll see me at the next. When is it to be?"

He had just made a note of it when Miss Raymond asked for the flute, and the Major was occupied for the next half-hour in playing, with his daughters to accompany him on the piano. Then it was Mr. Everard's turn

again, and Lilian saw with much pleasure, and a certain amount of amusement, how the tide was turning in his favour. His playing astonished her friends, and her plan for making him better appreciated by them was certainly succeeding. She felt both touched and glad, too, to see how much brighter even this one evening of pleasant intercourse with others had made the blind man's face look. Even her Aunt Winifred was gentle and kind to him, and laid aside, in talking to her blind guest, something of the scornful stateliness, which even social politeness did not entirely conceal, in her treatment of other members of the race, against whom she was so bitter.

"Don't you like my new piano, Mr. Everard?" said Lilian, coming to his side as some of the party were rising to leave. "It was my birthday present six months ago."

"It has been a treat to me to play it," he answered. "You are a fortunate young lady, Miss Lilian. And a very kind one, too," he added, "to charm me out of my solitude into this beautiful home of yours for my Christmas Eve. For it is beautiful, I know, though I cannot see it."

"My aunts are very good to me," said Lilian; "they give me so many pretty things, and nearly always let me do what I like. But I suppose nobody is ever *quite* satisfied," she added, with a half-sigh.

"That means that *you* are not?" said Mr. Everard. "I do not know your troubles, Miss Lilian, but I trust they are not great ones. I wonder how my other young friend is keeping her Christmas Eve?"

"You mean the lighthouse-keeper's daughter?" said Lilian. "I have been meaning to go and see her, but I have not done so yet. The Stuarts tell me she is a wild girl, and ran away from school when she was little, and

that no one can manage her. But I heard from some one who saw her about two months ago that she is so different to most girls, that it is not fair to judge her quite as one would judge others."

"It is not," said Mr. Everard. "Poor child! I do not find her wild or wilful. Go and see her some day, Miss Thursfield—you will be interested in her. Good night, my child! May I ask for my boy to be called? God bless you, Miss Lilian, for helping to brighten a lonely life."

"I don't want you to be lonely any more," said Lilian, with tears in her eyes. "You must come and see me again, and play my beautiful piano. When shall I come for my next organ lesson?"

Mr. Everard fixed the day; and then Major Carlisle came to bid him good night, and ask when the next recital was to be, and everyone shook hands with him, and Mr. Roper laid his hand on his shoulder and said, "Remember, you dine with us to-morrow, Everard!" And the blind organist went out from the warmly-lighted hall, leaning on his boy's arm, into the frosty, starlight night, with a happier, warmer feeling in his heart than he had known for five years.

"I *do* like him, Lilian!" exclaimed Katie Stuart, as she and Constance were dressing in Lilian's room, for their drive home. "He is dreadfully pale and thin, but I had no idea his face was so beautiful; had you, Constance?"

"You always looked at his clothes," said Constance, quietly; "I told you he had an interesting face. He was happy this evening, and that made all the difference; I expect he hasn't much fire, or many comforts at home. What a pretty room this is of yours, Lilian!"

"Yes, I would have this room if I lived here," said Katie. "I like this little turret. Where does that door lead, Lilian?"

"Down a flight of stairs," answered Lilian, her face

slightly flushing, "and out into that old bit of garden overgrown with bushes."

"Stairs in the wall!" exclaimed Katie. "Oh, how delightful! Of course the house is haunted; these old houses always are. *This* would be the haunted room here, I know. I don't think I would sleep in it, after all!"

"Cook says it is haunted," said Lilian, "but I never see any ghost; I don't believe in them."

"Why didn't you ask the Miss Fortescues to-night?" asked the chattering Katie, disregarding a sign from her sister to the effect that she was ready to go. "I would have had only *young* people at my party, if I had been you, Lilian."

"I wanted Mr. Everard," answered Lilian, "and I thought it was nicer to have some people of all sorts. I don't know the Miss Fortescues particularly well, Katie; we only call."

"But don't you like them?" asked Katie. "We dined there not long ago—my first dinner-party, Lilian—and I enjoyed it so much! Everything was splendid, and the girls have the most lovely Indian jewellery you can imagine. Don't you care for jewellery?"

"Yes, I do," said Lilian, who was not without that feminine weakness; "but, Katie, I can't like the Miss Fortescues better than other people because they have beautiful jewels, and more money than most people. My aunts don't care for me to know them very well."

"Mamma says they are very gay," said Katie, "and she doesn't want us to get into their set; but we do see them sometimes, and I should like to see them a great deal more often. I wish we need not be so particular!"

"You ought not to want to be like them, Katie," said Constance, reprovingly. "I wonder what people would say if papa let us go about as they do?"

"I'm sure your life is much nicer than theirs," said

Lilian. "I don't envy them at all, and I think *your* nice evenings are much pleasanter than their grand parties. Aunt Evelyn went to one soon after we came, and she didn't like it at all."

"I didn't like it the other day, either," said Constance; "everything was so stiff, and those girls are very fast. I shouldn't like you to be like them, Katie."

"Nellie Argyle is dreadfully jealous, because we went and she didn't," said Katie. "She would like above all things to be intimate there. Don't look so grave, Connie! I believe I have a natural love of gaiety, but it shan't run away with me. And I have enjoyed Lilian's 'old-fashioned party,' as she calls it, better than the General's dinner, after all."

"It is Christmas Eve," said Lilian, in her sweet voice. "It doesn't seem to me as if we ought to be thinking of all that gay life to-night. I shouldn't have cared for the Miss Fortescues' stories about their fast friends half as much as for Mr. Everard's beautiful music. *That* suits Christmas-time. Hark! there are the carol-singers in the garden; let us go down and listen."

It was an old custom for the choirs of the three parishes in Pointhaven to unite on Christmas Eve and spend two hours—from ten to twelve—in carol-singing in the town and immediate neighbourhood; a sweet, old custom, causing little differences and jealousies between one parish and another to be all forgotten in the joy, shared alike by all, in the coming Heavenly Birthday. Lilian was glad that they did not forget the old Tower in their rounds; and Hazel, standing out on the lighthouse rocks, as she had stood every year since she was a little child, caught the sound of the carol-singers' voices in the distance, as the choirs walked along the beach from the Tower, returning to the town that way, in order that the fishers on the beach, and the lonely dwellers on the Perilpoint Rocks might also

hear the Christmas sounds, and feel that they were not cut off from their share in the general rejoicing. She had waited for them, and, calling her father and mother, when she heard the first faint sounds in the distance, they listened together. Hazel loved to hear the voices come nearer and nearer, until, if the night were moonlight, she could see the procession coming along the beach past the fishing huts. And then gradually, as it went up again into the town, the carols would come fainter and fainter, until they died away quite in the distance, and the only music left was the plashing of the waves against the rocks.

Hazel's eyes filled with tears as she followed her father and mother in-doors. There was something unearthly in this night-music, which struck a quivering hidden chord in her frame, and made her feel that strange mixture of happiness and sorrowful yearning which beautiful sounds *will* bring to those who love them—they know not why, nor after *what* they yearn. This feeling was another of the things which puzzled Hazel, and she doubted anyone's power to explain it exactly, since even Mr. Everard had confessed that *he* could not. But at any rate, he knew what it was, and there was sympathy in that. And Hazel was quite sure that "the stranger out of the organ-pipes," as she called him, knew it too. She wished he could have heard that sweet carol-music along the sands, with its rippling accompaniment, played by the waves as they rolled in from the bay. She thought he would have enjoyed it, and that it would have made that beautiful light come into his eyes, which she had remembered with a sort of fascination, since that afternoon at St. Mary's. Those organ-sounds, and that light in the player's eyes haunted her sometimes. They haunted her this Christmas Eve, and she tried in vain to shut them out from her mind, till sleep came, and banished them for her.



CHAPTER XII.

“Each your doing,
So singular in each particular,
Crowns what you are doing in the present deeds,
That all your acts are queens.”

— *Winter's Tale.*

HAZEL woke next morning with a confused sense of something unusual being in the air. She had been far away in her dreams, visiting a hot Indian plain, where she had been a little child again, living in a white house with tall trees round it, and black figures moving here and there among them. And she had seemed to have one of those dark-faced figures watching her, as she lay in a little cot, hung all round with curtains, and she had had snatching visions of a lady all in white, who had seemed, as it were, to float all around her, but always to elude her grasp as soon as she had endeavoured to detain her, and whose likeness eluded her fancy in an equally provoking manner, when, as she now lay awake, she tried to give it a distinct form in her imagination. It had been such a vivid dream, that when Hazel awoke, the coldness of the atmosphere in her little room was startling, and she lay, not quite sure who and where she was, till a faint sound of church-bells struck on her ear, and she started up, exclaiming—

"It is Christmas Day! What queer things I have been dreaming!"

She dressed quickly, and opening her window before she went downstairs, leaned out into the frosty air to listen a few moments to the bells. Pointhaven was well off for bells, and they were ringing now from the three churches together—ringing out joyful peals across the sands and across the bay, "right into the lighthouse windows," as Hazel said, as she listened to them.

She had decked out the parlour with red-berried holly, and it looked gay and bright that early Christmas morning, when Jack, invited to spend the whole day at the lighthouse, arrived at breakfast-time, rubbing his big hands with cold, and wishing a hearty "Merry Christmas" to his uncle, and aunt, and cousin. The warm firelight was inviting, after a long, cold walk, but Jack gave more of his attention to Hazel than to the fire. In her plain dress of dark blue stuff, with its neat white ruffle, and with no ornament or attempt at finery, she looked, Jack thought, as far superior to the flashy servant-girls who tried to draw his attention in the streets at Marston's Ferry as a princess would look to a dressed-up wooden doll.

"I'd rather, though, she didn't look quite so—so——," Jack didn't know what word to use, and gave it up, continuing to himself—"She'd look like a real lady if she was dressed like 'em—that she would. She ain't no more like her father and mother nor I am, not so much maybe, for folks say I takes after my uncle. I'd think there were a bit of a chance for me if she looked like other lasses. I'd best wait a bit 'afore I talks to her about marryin'; maybe she'll settle down like in a while, and she don't favour none of the young fishermen hereabouts—that's one thing." And Jack accompanied his uncle and aunt and incomprehensible cousin to church, in a tolerably contented frame of mind. If Hazel had not ever yet thought of *him*

as a lover, it was even more certain that she had never thought of any of his chums—the young fishers of Point-haven—nor, indeed, of any one at all. For in spite of her fancies, she was too sensible a girl to think of her betters in that fashion. And with these thoughts Jack comforted himself, and resolved to “bide his time.”

Hazel watched her kind friend, Mr. Everard, that morning as he sat at the organ, and she thought his face looked brighter than she had seen it before. She was glad; for she had wondered several times how he would spend his Christmas Day, and he looked as if it really was a happy day to him. She had dressed up his little bare parlour with holly the day before—not that he could see whether it looked prettier or not, but because she wanted it to look like Christmas in Mr. Everard’s room, just as much as anywhere else. And he had been so pleased at her thought, and, though he could not see the bright berries, had taken as much interest in the decoration of his little room as she had taken herself. It was so long since anyone had tried to brighten his Christmas for him—even with a few bits of holly which he could not see—and he felt very grateful to his little friend, the lighthouse-keeper’s daughter, for her thought of him. Some little Christmas gifts, too, from the Tower, and from the Ropers and Stuarts, had surprised him that morning, and helped, together with the remembrance of the pleasant preceding evening, to give his face the happy look which Hazel noticed so gladly.

Hazel went to St. Mary’s in the afternoon to hear that beautiful organ again, which she had actually touched and brought sounds from herself! She longed to touch it again! It was so kind of that stranger, she thought, not to be angry with her for her venturesomeness; she felt sure that Mr. Reynolds, the organist, would never have forgiven her if *he* had caught her. Manlinson and his wife were spending the afternoon in visiting some friends on the

beach, but Jack had insisted on accompanying Hazel to church, when he had found that she had a great wish to go. He had tried to persuade her to let him give her a long row on the water that afternoon, knowing that to be a very favourite amusement of hers; but as she would not give up going to church, he went there with her instead, determined not to be deprived of her company this time. Hazel was disappointed this Christmas afternoon in the music. The organ sounded very different under Mr. Reynolds's management to what it had done under the stranger's hands, two months ago; and when Jack inquired, as they left the church, if she were satisfied, Hazel confessed, that "though it had been a very nice service, she thought the music would have been more beautiful."

"I thought 'twas fine," said Jack. "What did ye expect, lass? Seems to me you can't never have heard anything better."

"Yes, I have," said Hazel, decisively. "Once I heard that organ sound just twice as beautiful. Don't laugh, Jack! It's little I know about it yet, but I do know that."

"When did you hear it?" asked Jack. "You don't come Sundays, do you?"

"It was on a week-day," Hazel answered. "I came in one day, and I found somebody mending the organ, and he played to me. It was so beautiful, Jack!"

But Jack's face showed no sympathetic brightness.

"You didn't ought to have had nothin' to do with any o' them chaps, Hazel," he said crossly. "S'pose you mean the one as looked like gentlefolk. I see him one day, and it won't do you no good to talk to the likes of *he*. I didn't think you'd run about after gentlefolks, Hazel, and let 'em play to you, and such like!"

Hazel drew herself up proudly, and the expression of her face made Jack repent of his interference.

"You don't know anything about it, Jack," she answered, haughtily. "I never ran about after him or any one of them. I did not know anyone was in the church when I went in. You have no right to speak to me like that, or to think of such things!"

"Hold hard, lass," said Jack, holding out his hand for forgiveness. "I didn't mean to vex ye, but I knows the deceitful ways some o' them chaps has, who sets themselves up above their neighbours, and I don't want ye to be fillin' your head with their nonsense. Didn't he speak no nonsense to ye, now?"

"No!" said Hazel, indignantly. "He was a gentleman, and he would not talk nonsense to a lighthouse-keeper's daughter. He was kind to me, and told me about the music, and that was all," she added, with tears rising to her eyes. "You are very unkind, Jack, and you shall not say such things!"

Jack kicked a stone across the road discontentedly.

"Anyhow you're gettin' your head filled with books and musicin', and such like," he said in a grumbling tone, "and what good will it do ye, to be set up above your own folk? You was always better than me, Hazel, and made me feel a poor rough sort of a fellow by the side of you, when you was a little thing, and now you're growin' up, seems like you won't be fit for the likes of me at all soon. You ain't proud and set up; I don't mean to say that—but—there, I don't know what it is, but I feels as if you were a sort of angel alongside of me. I'm a plain rough fellow, I know, Hazel, and I can't mind my speech like you do; but I've always loved you, that I have, and I don't think it's fair for you to want to learn all them fine things, that'll make you look down on me as if I was the dust under your feet."

"I don't look down on you a bit, Jack," said Hazel, taking his big rough hand in hers. "You've always been

very good to me, and you know I care for you next to my father and mother. The things I want to learn will never make me care less for you—but, Jack, I can't help it, if I don't feel like you about things; you know I don't feel like father and mother either. I don't want to vex any of you—I don't know why I'm different from what I ought to be; but I can't help it, Jack, indeed I can't! You don't know how miserable I'd be if you took away my books and things from me! I want to understand so many things, and I'm only just beginning to understand anything at all. Please, dear Jack, don't ask father and mother to make me give up the things I love! I wish I didn't love them, sometimes; I know girls like me can't expect to live the same sort of life as—as—young ladies do; but I feel so queer sometimes—you don't know what I feel like, and I can't explain, and father and mother don't understand. Don't be angry with me!"

Jack was touched, for though he could not understand the thoughts and feelings which tormented his cousin, he saw that they were very real, and he promised not to interfere with her beloved books, by complaining to his uncle and aunt.

"Poor lass!" he said. "I can't make ye out. It's what's to come to ye by-and-bye as puzzles me. Seems to me you'll never settle down like your mother, to marry a poor fisher or sailor—such—such as I be, we'll say."

Hazel instinctively shuddered.

"I'm not seventeen yet, Jack," she said. "It won't be time for me to think of marrying for a long while yet. Why should I think about it? Father and mother wont want me to go away till I'm much older, and I don't want to think about what's going to happen a long way off. *You'll* have to think about marrying first, and you're not old enough yet."

"I don't know about that," said Jack, grimly. "I know

some girls at Marston's Ferry who wouldn't say 'No' if I asked 'em. Not as I've much to do with 'em; but I've a respectable place now, Hazel, and good wages, and I'm over twenty."

If Jack had any idea of making Hazel jealous of those Marston's Ferry girls he was disappointed. She had not the remotest idea that her Cousin Jack's love for her was of anything more than a cousinly nature; indeed, she considered it to be a sort of brotherly affection, for she had looked upon Jack as a big brother when they were both little children.

"Twenty isn't near old enough to get married," she said. "You had better not think about it yet, Jack, and when you do, I hope you will choose the nicest of the girls you know, who will make you happy and comfortable."

"Maybe I will," said Jack, with a laugh. "What else will ye wish for me, Hazel?"

"Anything good," said Hazel, smiling up at his face, which had still a frown upon it. "You've always been a good kind cousin to me, Jack, and I want you always to be happy. I should like everyone to be happy," she added wistfully.

"You won't even see how to make *me* happy though," said Jack, crossly, to himself; but he thought it was no use to give her any more hints yet. He had better let her be a while longer. Something in her face seemed to tell him that she had not herself quite all the happiness which she wished others to have; and he stroked her little hand affectionately as he said—"Poor lass! you're but a child yet, and I won't bother you; but you do care a little bit for your rough cousin Jack, don't you? And you'll forgive me what I said to you a while ago?"

"Of course I will," said Hazel, rather sadly, "only you mustn't say things like that to me again, Jack."

"I won't," said Jack, humbly. "Give me a kiss, and make up."

Hazel submitted, with a reluctance which she concealed, for fear of wounding Jack's feelings again; and they rowed across the bay to Perilpoint silently, reaching the light-house just in time for Hazel to have the pleasure of lighting the lamps. She was fond of lighting them herself, and often did it even when her father was at home; and when they were all lit, she stood and looked out, after her usual fashion, over the sea, almost wishing she could spend her evening up there: for some neighbours from the huts on the beach were coming in to chat with her father and mother, and she did not care to see them. However, she must go down, and she helped her mother to prepare the tea cheerfully, and to entertain the evening guests as well as she could. And Jack was in an excellent temper, fortunately, and did not annoy her by sitting in the chimney corner watching her every movement with a discontented face. It was Christmas night, and therefore it had a charm of its own, and Hazel was happy, in spite of uncongenial company. The fishwives' gossip did not interest her; but from her firelight corner, where she sat near her father, she liked to watch them, and imagine that the whole scene was a picture rather than a reality. The bright-coloured skirts which the fishwives wore on Sundays and high-days, and the white handkerchief pinned across their shoulders, or sometimes tied round their heads, formed a picturesque costume, and their curious gestures, and sometimes *more* curious language, amused Hazel, so long as they left her to herself to watch them quietly. She was not fond of talking to them, for they were rough and uncouth in their manners, and had no sympathy with her on any subject. She knew they looked upon her as a "proud, stuck-up lass," or else made game of her, so she kept very quiet in her corner, and preferred looking upon them as part of a picture, to receiv-

ing any notice from them. They were many of them good, thrifty wives enough, honest and respectable too, in their way, and Hazel thought that if she were a lady she would like to visit them in their huts, and to try to do them good; but as she was, she could not get on with them at all. They were all secretly vexed that the lighthouse-keeper's daughter should be so much fairer in appearance, and so much more refined in manners than themselves; she had no business to be so, they said, for what was she better than they? And this feeling of envy made their treatment of her never quite pleasant, and Hazel had learnt to hold more and more aloof from them and their families as she grew older. She had a habit now of "making pictures," as she called it, of things and people which she did not like as realities, and this picture-making added much to her happiness. She could then forget the disagreeable part of her surroundings, and only look at the pleasant side of them—her incongruous self being left out of the scene, as the looker-on. The bright dresses of the fishwives, and the homely, rugged faces themselves, lighted up by the bright firelight, had a fascination for her, looked upon as pictures, and the rough voices reached her ear with a softened sound, heard through the vista of her own imagination. For her corner was to her a little separate world, filled with pleasant scenes to suit her own fancy, and with people who spent their Christmas night in a different fashion to her companions round the hearth.

And deep in this world of her own the voices of her father and mother, and Jack, and their friends came to her dimly, like voices in a dream, till her father's voice, speaking to her, startled her from her reverie, and brought her back to *his* world suddenly, making her part of that rough, unsympathetic party again after all.

"Where's your thoughts, my girl?" he said, in his big, cheery voice. "You sit so silent-like in your corner, that

you make your old father forget his little girl, while he has a bit of chat with his neighbours."

"I'm very happy, father," said Hazel, slipping her hand into his. "I've been busy thinking, and didn't want to talk. There's always plenty to think about, you know, father."

"She don't take no' count o' the likes of we," said one of the neighbours, with a rather derisive smile; "your girl don't think us worth the trouble o' talkin' to, Manlinson."

"Nonsense," said Manlinson, "my girl ain't such a silly one as to look down on her neighbours, for all she mayn't be just like 'em. My Hazel has queer fancies, I don't deny, but you mistake her, all of you; don't they, child?"

"I don't want to set myself up, father," said Hazel, quietly; "I didn't want to talk, that was all. I like better to think sometimes."

"Thinkin' won't earn a livin'," said the neighbour; "that's all I say. What's your girl going to do when she gets up a bit older, Manlinson? Maybe she won't want to bide at home all her days, and whose house'll she be fit to keep?"

"Mine," was on the tip of Jack's tongue, but he forbore.

"She hasn't got to think of that yet awhile," said Mrs. Manlinson, joining in her daughter's defence. "Hazel's going to stop along with her father and mother a good time yet. She's our only one, and she ain't going out to service to please nobody."

"She don't look fit for service, to be sure," said the neighbour, scornfully. "Seems to me she'd be sittin' in the parlour, book-larnin', when she ought to be scrubbin' the floors. I s'pose you helps your mother *once* in a while, Hazel?"

"I help her every day," answered Hazel, indignantly. "I would not leave my mother to do all the work, Mrs. Jones!"



THEY ROWED IN SILENCE ACROSS THE BAY TO PERILPOINT.—Page 113.

"Hazel's a good girl," said Mrs. Manlinson, "and I can tell you, Bessy Jones, she can light a fire, and make a puddin'—ay—and sweep out a room too—as well as the best of ye. She likes making bread and puddin' too, and can do it first-rate, an' if she don't like *some* of her work, she never complains, my girl doesn't."

"Look at her hands!" continued Mrs. Jones, scornfully, "there's hands for a workin' girl! And what's a face like that good for, for folks as hasn't got time to stop a-looking at it? She may be a good lass, but I do say it's a pity she ain't a big, strong, hearty-lookin' girl like Mrs. Thompson's there. That's the kind o' girl for folks like we."

"Girls is as nature makes 'em, I s'pose," said Manlinson, "and I wouldn't change my pretty Hazel for nobody. She's a pictur', she is, and I likes to look at her."

This latter part of the conversation was carried on in low tones, while Hazel busied herself in preparing the supper-table. Her father and mother watched her, as she moved about the room; and comparing her slender, graceful form, and delicate face, with its rose-leaf colouring and dark expressive eyes, with the coarse beauty of Sarah Thompson, the belle of the fishing-huts, they thought they would not wish her different to what she was, for all the queer thoughts and fancies for which the neighbours ridiculed her. Mrs. Manlinson sighed once or twice as she looked at her, and changed the subject.

"Never you mind what they say, Hazel," said Jack, tenderly, as he bade his cousin good night, after the rest of the company had set out in their boat to return home. "Never you mind, if they can't understand ye. You're real beautiful, like a queen, and we poor rough folk ain't hardly fit to look at you, that's the truth. But your father, and mother, and me, we just about care for you, and we'd do anything for you, Hazel!"

"I know you would," said Hazel, gratefully, and looking up she saw that there were actually tears in Jack's eyes.

"You're very good to me, Jack, and I will always care for you. But don't say things like that about me; I'm not a bit better than any of you—only—only I know I'm different somehow, and I can't help it. You don't think me a horrid, proud thing, do you, as they do on the beach?"

"Bless you, no!" answered Jack, indignantly. "I've vexed you myself sometimes, lately, I know, and I wish I hadn't. I know you ain't proud, as they say, but you ain't like them, you see, and it makes them speak hardly of ye. And I know you can't help yourself, poor little lass, because you don't feel like we folks do."

"No, I can't," said Hazel, sadly. "Dear Jack, I am sorry if I have made you feel unhappy!"

"You can't help it," said Jack, brushing his hand furtively across his eyes. "Never mind; I'll wait a bit."

And squeezing her hand with a violence which almost made her cry out, he sprang down the rocks to his boat, and rowed himself off hastily in the direction of Marston's Ferry, leaving Hazel to wonder, as she went indoors, what he was going to "wait for," with which she evidently had to do.

Jack's behaviour towards her had certainly changed lately. He never used to be either so cross, or quite so affectionate, towards her as he was now by turns, and this variableness of manner puzzled her. She was sorry, too, to think that he should trouble himself so much about her, and touched at his taking her part so kindly, in spite of his own discontent at her not being more like other girls. She did not want to lose Jack's friendship; it had always been so strong and faithful, and though she certainly did shrink from him at times, when he required too much of her company, she valued his friendship still, and would not have hurt his feelings for the world. But what Jack was "waiting for" she had no idea, the true state of the case having never entered her head.



CHAPTER XIII.

“She is as forward of her breeding as
I’ the rear of birth.”

— *Winter’s Tale.*

LILIAN THURSFIELD had put off her visit to the lighthouse-keeper’s daughter from day to day, fearing lest Hazel should notice the likeness between herself and her brother if she visited her too soon after her meeting in St. Mary’s Church with Arthur. For though other people in Point-haven might have also noticed the likeness between them, they were not likely to be struck by it as Hazel might be, they all being ignorant of the fact that Lilian had a brother. Lilian did not think it likely that she would herself be recognised as the little girl who had played with Hazel on the sands so long ago, for Hazel was very young at the time, and would, Lilian thought, have only very dim recollections of her playfellows. One bright morning in the beginning of March, however, when she was visiting the fishers’ families on the beach, with her Aunt Evelyn, she proposed that they should walk on as far as the lighthouse.

“I don’t know the way, my dear,” said Miss Evelyn, “except by rowing across the bay, and I don’t see a boatman about just now.”

"I know the way," said Lilian. "We must take this path to the top of the cliff, and walk along there till we come to that plantation—do you see it? You go through that to the edge of the cliff, and then there is a pathway right down the Perilpoint Rocks to the lighthouse. I asked a woman in one of the huts just now, and she told me. Do come, Aunt Evelyn; I expect it is a lovely walk."

"Well, if you like, my dear," said Miss Evelyn. "It is a pleasant morning for a walk, and it isn't very far, I suppose?"

"Oh no," said Lilian, "not further than we often walk. I want to go and see the lighthouse girl, Aunt Evelyn. Mr. Everard asked me at Christmas-time if I would go, and I have never been yet, and I am sure she and her mother will like to see us, for the Ropers can't get so far, and Mr. Jervis is nearly as old as Mr. Roper; I don't believe *he* comes."

Mr. Jervis was the curate of St. Philip's, and was, like his rector, a quiet and elderly man. He visited the lighthouse occasionally, but never saw Hazel, for if she saw him coming she escaped, and hid herself among the rocks till he had gone. He was a very good and hard-working man, but stern in look and manner, and Hazel had never forgotten the severity of his reproof for her naughtiness in running away from school years ago. She had felt ever since that Mr. Jervis looked upon her as a black sheep—and a *very* black one—and had been in too much dread of another scolding ever to risk meeting him again. The deep, solemn tones of displeasure, in which he had called her to account for that act of rebellion against parish authority still rang in her ears. It had been useless to attempt an explanation of her reasons for running away; Mr. Jervis had not listened to them, and Hazel had felt sure, child as she then was, that if he *had* listened, he would not have understood them, or considered them to be reasons at all.

So from that time she had fled from Mr. Jervis, and even from his most distant shadow, if it had ever chanced to meet her eye in the streets of Pointhaven.

Miss Evelyn and Lilian found their walk a picturesque if a rough one. The view, as they walked along the top of the cliff, was beautiful—the sunny bay, with the little fishing-boats tossing up and down on its heaving surface, and the long chain of rocks, which the walkers were approaching, shelving down sharply, as they ran out to sea, with the grey old lighthouse at their further end, and the sharp peaks out beyond, over which the in-coming tide was noisily washing, in its eagerness to hide them from the view of the unwary passer-by.

“Beautiful!” said Miss Evelyn, as they emerged from the plantation, and stood a moment at the edge of the cliff to rest before commencing to descend the Perilpoint path-way.

“Very!” said Lilian eagerly, “but Mrs. Roper was telling me the other day of some terrible shipwrecks which have occurred on the rocks.”

Miss Evelyn shuddered.

“Give me your arm, Lilian,” she said; “the path is so near the edge of the rocks just here, that it makes me giddy. Fancy living in such a place, having to come along this dreadful path every time you wish to get to the town!”

“You haven’t a very steady head, you know, Aunt Evelyn,” said Lilian, smiling; “I dare say the lighthouse people don’t think it dreadful at all. See, it is really quite safe, and now it is easier. Listen, Aunt Evelyn—isn’t that some one singing?”

They both stood still and heard distinctly sounds of singing, far down below their feet. The rocks were still high, and the voice came up, faint and sweet, as if the singer were down close to the water’s brink. They went a

few yards further, and then Lilian saw a sort of rude pathway breaking away from the edge of the rocks, on the side furthest from the bay, and leading down amongst great boulders of grey stone to the edge of the seething water. On one of these boulders, close to the water, in a sort of natural canopy, formed by an overhanging rock, sat a young girl, resting her elbow on her knee and her head on her hand, as she looked out dreamily over the sea, singing, as she looked, in a low, sweet voice, a plaintive song, to the accompaniment of the advancing waves.

Lilian peeped over the rocks, silently to listen, and caught the refrain of the song distinctly—

“Come to me, sing to me, rock me to sleep,
Cradle me soft in thy billows, great deep !”

“What a sweet voice !” she said to herself. “That girl must be the lighthouse-keeper’s daughter. I wonder what her face is like ?”

She beckoned to her aunt to come nearer and listen too, and again the refrain came up, to a wild, half-sad, yet soothing melody—

“Come to me, sing to me, rock me to sleep,
Cradle me soft in thy billows, great deep !”

A slip of Miss Evelyn’s foot upon the rocks, just as the voice ceased, made sufficient sound to startle the singer ; she turned round hastily, and looked up at the two strange faces above with a half frightened look. Lilian looked down at the face just brought into view with almost as startled an expression on her own. Could that face—that beautiful, refined face—and those dark wistful eyes with their long lashes, possibly belong to the lighthouse-keeper’s daughter ? Lilian could hardly believe it, though Arthur had told her what an interesting face the girl had—and Miss Evelyn too was taken aback, and gently drew Lilian

away, whispering, "This cannot be the girl, Lilian—quite impossible!"

But Lilian looked again, and was sure, in spite of her *feelings* to the contrary, that it *was* the girl and no other. By way of putting both Hazel and herself at ease she called down the rocks—

"We have come to see the lighthouse, and we heard some one singing, and came to see who it was. Are you not afraid to stay down there, now the tide is coming in so fast?"

"No, I am not afraid," answered Hazel, mounting the steep path with swift grace of movement. "I sit down there very often and watch the tide come in, and I know just how long it will take to reach the rock where I sit. When it comes very near I climb back again up this path; I know just how long I may stay and be safe. I like to be down there, near the water."

"It must be very pleasant," said Lilian. "How quickly you climb! I suppose you are quite accustomed to these rocks? I should be afraid to go down there where you were sitting."

"I have lived here as long as I can remember," said Hazel, "and I have always run about as much as I liked, so I do not mind the steep places. I think you would soon get used to them too if you lived here long. May I show you the way to the lighthouse, madam?" she added, respectfully turning to Miss Evelyn. "My mother will be so pleased to see you and the young lady."

"Is the lighthouse-keeper your father, my child?" asked Miss Evelyn. "Are you Hazel Manlinson?"

"Yes, that is my name—I am the lighthouse-keeper's daughter," answered Hazel. "My father is out fishing. He has been away two days, but my mother is at home; she will be glad if you will rest a little while at our house. It is a rough walk to the lighthouse."

"It is, indeed," said Miss Evelyn. "Must you come this way whenever you want anything in the town?"

"Oh no," said Hazel, "we generally row across the bay to the beach. There is a little cove down here on this other side of the rocks, where father keeps a boat, and we can get to the beach in a few minutes. Mother never goes to Point-haven this way, by the rocks; it is longer, and it tires her."

"What is the name of that song you were singing just now?" asked Lilian.

Hazel blushed.

"I don't know," she said, in a low voice. "I make songs to myself sometimes when I sit alone here, on the rocks; I made that one a little while ago. I did not know anyone could hear me sing it."

"Who taught you to make songs?" asked Lilian, in an astonished tone.

"No one taught me," said Hazel, still colouring deeply. "They come to me—I can't help making them. I think perhaps the sea brings them. The sea is full of music."

"I think so too," said Lilian. "It must be very nice to sit here and make songs. But don't you feel very lonely sometimes?"

"Yes, sometimes I do," answered Hazel, rather sadly. "I should like to talk to some one sometimes—I mean to some one who could tell me things."

"Have you not a friend in the town who tells you things?" asked Lilian. "I have heard about you from Mr. Everard, and that you and he have long talks together. You see him very often, don't you?"

"Yes," said Hazel, with sparkling eyes; "he is very good to me! But he can't come here and *look* at the things I like to look at. Sometimes I wish I had a friend here who could see the things that I see. It would be so pleasant."

"Don't your father and mother see the things that you see?" asked Miss Evelyn, smiling.

Hazel blushed, and hesitated.

"Not all of them, I think," she said, in a low tone. "I do not know how to tell you what I mean. I know myself, but I can't explain."

"You are a funny girl," said Lilian, "but I think we can understand what you mean. Will you let me go all over the lighthouse? I have never seen one, and I should like to go over yours very much. I often look out at the lights from my window at home, when I go to bed."

"Can you see the lights?" said Hazel, eagerly. "I am so fond of them! I can remember them *very* long ago, when I don't seem to remember anything else. I light them very often for father. Please come in and rest, while I call mother."

Miss Evelyn and Lilian sat down in the tidy lighthouse parlour, and their eyes, after watching Hazel's graceful figure as she left the room, met, with an expression of mutual wonder and interest, which expression gave way to one of surprise and almost of incredulity, when Mrs. Manlinson entered a moment afterwards, followed by her daughter. The idea of a relationship between the two seemed to Lilian almost absurd. In Hazel's delicate complexion, refined, expressive features, and graceful form, there was not a trace of resemblance to her mother's round, homely, good-humoured, but decidedly rough and rugged face, and strong, robust, ungraceful figure. Good-looking, after her own fashion, Mrs. Manlinson had always been considered, and her neat, tidy dress gave her a far more respectable air than most of her neighbours on the beach; but her good looks were those of a hard-working peasant woman only, while those of Hazel—well, Lilian could only look at her, and wonder.

"I am one of the Miss Raymonds. from the Tower,"

said Miss Evelyn, "and this is my niece. We thought we would visit the lighthouse this fine morning, and we were glad to accept your daughter's offer of a few minutes' rest, for the walk is rather tiring."

"I'm right glad to see ye," said Mrs. Manlinson; "'tis a rough walk for ladies, surely, and you're kindly welcome to rest as long as you please. Hazel, child, fetch the cake you baked this morning, and the home-made wine; maybe the ladies won't be offended if I offer them a bit of refreshment after their walk?"

The cake looked very good, and the plates and glasses which Hazel set out were so spotlessly clean and bright, that neither Miss Evelyn nor Lilian felt any objection to partaking of the proffered lunch, and Lilian thought lunch in a lighthouse quite as good as a picnic, and more uncommon. She had noticed the frequent glances which Hazel had given her since they met, and was wondering if her likeness to "Mr. Miller" was noticed by the lighthouse girl, when, as Miss Evelyn remarked—"We hope you will let us go up and see the lamps. My niece, Miss Thursfield, has never been in a lighthouse before," Hazel started forward, with a mingled expression of eagerness and disappointment, exclaiming—

"Is *that* your name? I am so sorry; I thought you *must* be my pretty little girl, the gentleman's sister! But his name is Miller, so you cannot be, after all. I wish you were!"

The poor girl's voice had such a disappointed tone, that Lilian, startled as she was, felt very much inclined to confess that she *was* Mr. Miller's sister; but Mrs. Manlinson's presence, and a warning look from her aunt held her back. She could not feel sure that a secret would be safe with Mrs. Manlinson, though it might be with her daughter, whose face looked pure and trustworthy enough to warrant even a stranger in putting entire confidence in its

owner. Lilian felt the colour come into her face, as she asked—

“What pretty little girl do you mean? When did you see her?”

“Several years ago,” answered Hazel. “She played with me on the sands one morning, and a little boy too, who was her brother; and a little while ago I saw *him*, and he told me his sister was not very far away from here. And I thought you must be his sister, because you look like him, and because you have golden hair and blue eyes, like the little girl’s. I liked that little girl so much!”

“My name is Thursfield,” said Lilian, not knowing what answer to make, without either betraying herself, or saying something not true—“Lilian Thursfield. I daresay you will see your little girl again some day. May we go up and see the lamps?”

Hazel led the way, and showed her visitors how the lamps were lighted, and took Lilian into the narrow gallery outside, that she might see the beautiful view, out over the sea on one side, and on the other, right across the beach and town, away to the woods and hills, which bordered the horizon.

“I should like to come and lodge here a little while, Aunt Evelyn,” said Lilian. “The air is quite delicious out there in the gallery, and the rocks, which we thought so high and steep as we came along, look quite small from this height. Oh, what a dear little room! Is it yours, Hazel?”

They were coming downstairs again, and Hazel’s door stood open, revealing a tiny apartment, very simply furnished, but adorned after Hazel’s own fashion, in a manner as tasteful, if not as expensive, as Lilian’s own. Hazel was rather proud of her room, and invited her visitors to look in. The window-bench was filled with flower-pots, containing her own specially favourite plants, showing only leaves at present, but giving evident signs of the care with which

they were tended ; the white-washed walls were decorated with devices of Házél's own ; bright-coloured seaweeds were arranged upon them in picturesque patterns, showing exquisite taste ; coloured texts and pictures, cut out of old books and papers, were set off to advantage in frames made of shells stuck upon cardboard ; bunches of other seaweeds hung here and there, and shells were strung together and hung upon the walls in pretty shapes. Upon the dressing-table and chest of drawers were various treasures, given to Hazel at different times by her father and Jack, some of them being curious things picked up by Manlinson during his sailor life, and amongst them lay more shells and pretty stones of all shapes and sizes—Hazel's new findings, or "presents from the sea," as she called them. All these pretty things, and the tastefulness of their arrangement, gave the little room a very bright, picturesque aspect ; and although the floor was only carpeted here and there, and the white curtains at the window and round the bed were of the coarsest kind, all were beautifully clean and neat.

The bookshelf on the wall attracted Lilian's special notice, and she looked to see what books this strange girl had got together to form her library. They were not many, and they were most of them old and well-worn—second-hand books, which Hazel had picked up cheaply, with carefully-hoarded pennies. There were a Bible and prayer book, and hymn book, in nice, tidy covers, for they were presents from her father and mother, and with them lay a nicely-bound *Pilgrim's Progress*, also a gift of long ago, showing signs of age and much reading. There were a few of Hazel's childish lesson and story-books, piled together, as discarded, though still valued, treasures ; there was the much-prized, but now coverless volume about the stars, and with it a small book on Physical Geography, into which Lilian peeped, wondering what Hazel could understand of

that. Two or three pages in particular she found turned down, and discovered that they belonged to a chapter on *Tides*. She did not know how Hazel, ever since her early childhood, had puzzled over that subject, as she sat on the rocks, watching the waves roll in or out—how intensely she had longed to know what made the sea come up regularly twice every day, and cover the peaks, and go out again after awhile as it had come. Her father's explanation, that the moon was the cause of it all, had only mystified her more and more, for she could not see what the moon, which was up in the sky, could possibly have to do with the sea, which was in the earth, and her father could not tell her. He knew it was so, and that was enough for him, but it was not enough for his inquiring little daughter. Jack had teased her, by telling her that it was the man in the moon, who drove the sea up to the land every day, and drew it back again, just to amuse himself; but that explanation had been always answered by Hazel, that "if there was a man in the moon, she was sure he would show more of himself than his face, and that as the face took up the whole moon, she didn't see where there was room for the rest of him at all; and therefore didn't believe there *was* a man there." The book of astronomy had given her a little light upon the moon, but the tides had remained an unexplained mystery, till she had at last asked Mr. Everard about them, and by his advice had purchased the book at which Lilian was looking.

"I read that book to Mr. Everard," Hazel explained, half shyly, "and he tells me what it means. We began at that part about the tides, because I wanted so much to learn about them. There is a pretty part about the clouds too; he says I may read that next, if I like."

"And can you understand those things when he explains them?" asked Miss Evelyn, rather doubtfully.

"Oh, yes!" answered Hazel, modestly; "Mr. Everard

explains things beautifully, and makes them quite easy. I like that book one of the best of all my books. I have not had it long, and I don't know much yet," she added, in a self-deprecating tone. "I write music most of my spare time, so that I can write down Mr. Everard's beautiful things, that he makes, on paper."

Lilian continued her inspection, and came next upon a worn, tattered *Family Shakespeare*.

"I haven't read much of that yet," said Hazel, "but I shall when I have time."

"What made you buy that?" asked Lilian, in some amusement.

"I opened it one day at the book-stall to see what it was like," answered Hazel, colouring, as she saw that her collection of books was creating some surprise in the minds of the ladies. "And I opened it just at a pretty story about a girl—I think her name was Perdita—who had lived with some shepherds since she was a baby, and who was really the daughter of a king. I felt so sorry for her, for she must have felt very strange, being a king's daughter, and yet living with those poor people. For though she did not know who she was, I think she must have felt different to them, and perhaps they did not understand her, and she felt uncomfortable sometimes. I thought it was such a pretty story, and I went on reading it, but I could not quite finish it, and I wanted to so much! So, as it did not cost much money, I bought it instead of another book, and read the rest of it as soon as I got home. I was so glad poor Perdita found out who she was at last! But I was sorry for the poor shepherds, because I daresay they had grown very fond of her."

"I have read that story, too," said Lilian, feeling more and more interest in this lighthouse-keeper's daughter, who enjoyed Shakespeare, "and I like it very much too. Have you read any more of the stories?"

"No, not yet," said Hazel, "I have not had time. But I like to think about Perdita. I think about her very often."

A dreamy expression came into the girl's dark eyes as she spoke, and Lilian watched her, wondering at the beauty of her face. She took down another book; it was a six-penny edition of Longfellow's poems.

"Are you fond of poetry, Hazel?" she asked.

"Yes," answered Hazel, "and I like *that* poetry very much. I have had that book a long time, and I have read a good deal of it. I bought it because I found some pretty verses about the sea in it."

One or two books of tales, a *Child's History of England*, well thumbed, an old atlas in many pieces, and a book of travels completed the library. Hazel's beloved music-book and papers were downstairs.

"Do you spend all your money on books, Hazel?" asked Miss Evelyn.

"I think I do—most of it," she answered, in a low voice. "I haven't much money of my own, but I save it up, and buy books whenever I can; I buy old ones, so they don't cost much. I don't want other things; mother gives me them, and she lets me do just what I like with my own pennies. Father gives me pennies sometimes for helping him to unpack the fish he catches, because he knows I don't like doing it. Father is very good to me, and I *would* help him without the pennies."

"Don't you like unpacking the fish, then?" asked Lilian.

"No," said Hazel, with a little shudder. "It is disagreeable. I like to catch fish myself, on the rocks, sometimes, but I don't like touching them—and father brings home such big baskets full! I do try not to mind," she added, looking up wistfully, "but I don't seem able to help it."

"You have made your room very pretty!" said Lilian, enthusiastically, as she followed her aunt downstairs. "I should never have thought of covering the walls with seaweed and shells in that fashion."

Hazel smiled, and coloured with pleasure. She loved every one of those shells, and every bit of the seaweed, as dear old friends, and had taken great pains to adorn her room with them, after her own ideas, and she was glad it was thought pretty.

"There is such a quantity of seaweed on the rocks here," she said, "all kinds; and there are shells too of all sorts, and on the beach as well. I like to pick them up, and see what I can do with them."

"We have stayed a long time upstairs, Mrs. Manlinson," said Miss Evelyn; "I fear it is your dinner hour, and that we have delayed you, but we have been admiring your daughter's room, and looking at her books and pretty things."

"Ay, she's made a fine room up there, ain't she?" said Mrs. Manlinson. "She's always been fond of messin' about there on the rocks, after her shells and her seaweeds, but it ain't many as would have thought to trim up a room like that with 'em, be it now? My Hazel's a very good girl, ma'am, but I daresay you've seen already she's got her fancies? Me and Manlinson we lets her be; they makes her happy, and 'tis her nature."

"I see that it is," said Miss Evelyn. "Your daughter is not like you in face, Mrs. Manlinson. I suppose she resembles her father?"

"Manlinson's a fine-lookin' man, I'll say that for him," said his wife, speaking rather rapidly, "and carries his age wonderful, too. But Hazel don't take after her father an' mother partikler; she never did. Maybe you wouldn't think she favoured her father more than she do me. 'Tis so betimes, ma'am; I daresay you've noticed? Now

Hazel, she seems to have struck out new like, her father says. Won't you rest a bit longer, ma'am?"

"Not now, thank you," said Miss Evelyn. "We shall hope to come and see you again soon. You do not see many visitors, I daresay?"

"No, ma'am, we don't," said Mrs. Manlinson; "the neighbours on the beach drops in betimes, but they in the town don't trouble themselves to come and see us. The clergyman and his wife, they used to come, before they got on so far in years, and Mr. Jervis, he looks us up, as you may say, once in a long while. But he gets an old gentleman too, and he don't care about crossin' the water, and its a long walk for him the other way."

"It is a very nice walk though," said Lilian. "I shall come and see you and your daughter again soon, Mrs. Manlinson; may I?"

"Ay, to be sure, miss, we'll be right glad to see ye," answered Mrs. Manlinson, heartily, and Hazel looked at Lilian with a wistful expression, which said "Come," as plainly as any words.

"Was your daughter born here?" asked Miss Evelyn. "Have you lived here a great many years?"

"Since Hazel were two or three year old about," said Mrs. Manlinson, stooping over the fire to look into one of her saucepans. "We lived in Sussex afore that—leastways I did, while my man was out at sea. We couldn't bide there after he gave up sailerin'; 'twas too nigh my poor babes' graves, and he said to me in a letter, afore he reached home the last time, that he wouldn't go there no more, and I was to come and wait for him at Southampton. So I brought my Hazel along, and soon after he got in, we came straight here."

"Did you lose many children?" asked Miss Evelyn.

"Yes, ma'am, I did," replied the woman, still stirring the contents of her saucepan. "It would have broken my

poor man's heart, I do believe, if he had come home and found his last babe dead and buried. He were terrible fond of children, and when the last but one was took, he says to me—' Wife, if we should have another bairn, and it's took from me, I don't think I'll get over it. Seems like my heart's nigh broke already, and it wouldn't bear no more.' And when he was out at sea after that, and heard there was another little one at home a-waitin' for him, you may be sure, ma'am, his letter that he wrote back was a'most crazy-like for joy. And folks say he spoils Hazel ; but there, ain't there reason for it, I say ?"

"I think there is," said Miss Evelyn, gently. "You have indeed had great troubles. Hazel is a comfort to you and her father, I hope ?"

"Ay, that she is !" said the mother, fondly. "She's a strange girl, and we can't understand her fancies, specially father—he can't ; but she can't help 'em, poor bairn, and she's a good girl, she always was. We lets her have her own way, and I spares her all the dirty work I can. I'm more fit for it than she."

"Do you think it is quite wise, though ?" said Miss Evelyn, rather hesitatingly. "Would it not be better to accustom her to such work as other girls in her station have to do ?"

"She'd *do* it, you know, ma'am," said Mrs. Manlinson, "she'd do anything to help me, but I can see it goes right against her, so I do the roughest work myself, and there's plenty there as *she* can do, that she don't mind so much. Besides, she don't seem made for hard, rough work, like other girls ; she hasn't got the strength for it. Now, I'm strong enough for anything—I always was—an' I don't mind what I do. I don't think it harms the girl, ma'am."

"I was thinking of her future," said Miss Evelyn, "when perhaps she may not have her mother by her side to do the rough work for her."

Mrs. Manlinson gave a half sigh.

"She'll stop along with her father and mother a good while yet," she said, "and what's to come after we'd best leave. I don't hold with girls of our sort takin' to book-learnin' and music and such like; I don't think it helps 'em to fill their station, and I think it does 'em harm, and Hazel, she knows it too. And her father quite worries about it betimes; but I says to him, and I thinks myself, it ain't no *sort* of use judgin' of our Hazel alongside of other girls, for she ain't like 'em, from top to toes, nor inside nor out, and she can't help it, and we can't help it. She worries about it herself sometimes, I know, but there's no alterin' nature—and we must take it as we find it. If you were to see my girl a little more, ma'am, you'd know what I mean; you'd see the difference between her and other girls of her sort."

"I do see it," said Miss Evelyn, looking out through the window at the figures of Hazel and her niece out on the rocks. "It is very difficult to know what is best in such a case, and that it is quite an unusual case I see plainly."

Again Mrs. Manlinson sighed, and an expression of doubt and irresolution crossed her face, followed, as she too looked out at her daughter, by one of strong affection, and *resolution* almost defiant.

"Hazel will always have a home along with her father an' mother, while they live," she said, in a determined voice, "and we don't never mean to send her out to service. She's our only one, and her father 'll never part with her, unless it was to see her married. An' she won't be thinkin' of *that* this long while, I know her well enough for that."

"In truth," thought Miss Evelyn, as she left the house and wished Hazel good morning as she passed her on the rocks, and was joined by Lilian, "in truth she is not likely to marry yet, I should think. Not only because she

is still but a child in years, but because it is utterly unlikely, from her appearance, and manners, and tastes, that she should ever consent to become the wife of anyone of her father's and mother's type."

There was an incongruity in the idea, with which even Miss Evelyn, after only once seeing the girl, was strongly impressed, and she could not get rid of the impression. Hazel's face and figure, her pretty room, and her low, musical voice haunted her and Lilian all day, and in strong relief they saw the homely, roughened, though kindly features of Mrs. Manlinson, and heard her uncultivated tones. That the relation of mother and daughter should exist between two such opposite beings seemed hardly credible, and Lilian did not wonder at the "strange feelings" to which the poor girl had confessed. Her appearance, intelligence, and refinement exceeded anything that she had imagined possible, and she could not dismiss Hazel's image from her mind the whole evening. She amused herself by reading over again the story of "Perdita," which had so deeply touched and interested the girl; she could not settle to any other reading.





CHAPTER XIV.

"Let not the music that is in us die."

—BONAR.

MR. EVERARD'S pupil made such good progress in her musical dictation-lessons, that six months after she had commenced her studies with him, she was able to write out one or two easy voluntaries which he had composed, and afterwards to play them slowly to him on his little organ, that he might hear if they were quite correctly written. It was a great triumph to Hazel when the last note was written, and she wished Mr. Everard could *see* what great pains she had taken to write out his music as neatly and beautifully as possible. However, he gave her praise enough when she had struck the last chord on the organ, and he had pronounced all to be perfectly correct, to make her feel very glad and happy, and well-rewarded too for her pains, for Mr. Everard seemed almost as pleased and triumphant over the success of his pupil as she felt herself, and was quite as eager to continue his lessons as she was to learn them. What she had yet done was very simple, and she well knew what a great deal she had yet to learn; but the success of this first attempt, and her master's evident pleasure in it, were very encouraging, and she grew to love her work better every day.

Mr. Everard's compositions, which Arthur Thursfield had written out for him, had been exceedingly well received by the public. The "March" had already enabled him to have his own beloved little organ put into the thorough repair which it had long needed, and the "Meditations" had given him, for the winter, a comfortable supply of logs, whose pleasant crackling in his little stove inspired him, in his lonely hours, to meditate again. Altogether, this winter had been a brighter one to the poor organist than any he had lately known. Prejudice was hard to move, and Lilian's example of kindness and courtesy to the blind man had not been followed up by others quite as readily as she had hoped; still it had *some* effect. The Ropers had visited him more frequently, and shown him more friendliness, and the Stuarts had spoken pleasantly to him when they had met him in the streets, and had helped to swell his recital audiences by inviting their neighbouring friends over to attend them; and other people too were *beginning* to take more notice of him. And even small kindnesses and little tokens of interest were felt by the lonely, long-neglected man with a keen pleasure, which none but himself could fully understand, and at the mere thought of which he would himself have smiled, long ago, in the days of his youth and popularity.

The hour spent weekly in giving Lilian Thursfield her organ lesson was a pleasant one to him; her bright gentleness and affectionate consideration for her blind master had entwined themselves round his heart, and were very sweet to him. It was so pleasant, as he grew old and grey, to feel that there were one or two among the young people, whom it was his nature to love, who did not despise him for his poverty, but would devote a little of their time to cheer his loneliness, and a few of their bright young spirits to enliven his desolate and often sad heart. For

his first little friend, Hazel, was no less gentle and affectionate towards him than Lilian, and the hours spent in exploring with her the (to her) unknown regions, where her thoughts had so long been wandering, were some of his pleasantest and brightest. The eager interest she took in whatever subject he brought forward, the quick intellect which received and retained his teachings, and her thorough appreciation of all that was good and beautiful; her wistful tones of voice when she brought forward new difficulties, and told him of new thoughts and new discoveries which puzzled her, and her true delight and pleasure when they could be explained, or at least sympathised with, all interested Mr. Everard more than he could tell, and made the lesson hours pass very swiftly to him as well as to his pupil. Indeed, though he felt an equal affection for his *two daughters*, as he was fond of calling them, Hazel interested him far more than Lilian. The latter had a gentle, earnest, affectionate nature, easily read by one whom she could trust—except with regard to her *one* secret, where she indeed had feelings unknown and unshared by anyone—but Hazel's nature was to Mr. Everard an unravelled mystery. He was doing his best to unravel it, and the process interested him intensely, but it was a puzzling matter. The contrast between the inner nature and the outward circumstances of his pupil struck him, and made him marvel more and more every day; and this very contrast, felt deeply by the poor girl herself, had the effect of making her character a difficult one to read. Fear of being misunderstood made her more reserved about her own thoughts than she would probably have been under different circumstances—and many of her thoughts and feelings could not be reached, for the simple fact that they were as incomprehensible to herself as to others. However, Mr. Everard was drawing her out little by little, and felt pleased and grateful for the growing confidence which she

placed in him, and the increasing freedom with which she told him of her unsympathised-with troubles.

Her intense love of music was the strongest bond of union between the master and his strange pupil. Lilian loved music too, but not with the same passionate intensity of the lighthouse-keeper's daughter—all the more passionate because of its long repression and forced imprisonment in her own breast. Where such a love had come from, to a girl in her position, was a perplexing question to the musician. She had told him that neither her father nor mother had any special sympathy with it, so it clearly was not inherited, and the outward circumstances of the girl's life—her lonely residence on the lighthouse rocks, with no companions but her father and mother—could not have imparted it to her.

"It is a gift from God," Mr. Everard said to himself, when he had perplexed himself for an hour on the subject vainly. "It is a direct gift from God to the girl herself, and I believe it is therefore right to encourage and cultivate it. He has given it to her to make her happy, and to be a blessing to her, if not for any other purpose, and it would be a disregard of His gift, as well as cruelty to the child, to force her to keep the love for ever to herself—only a love and nothing more. And if I am the instrument appointed to draw it out, and make it a means of happiness to her, I will do my best in the matter. The music in the child's soul shall not die while the poor blind musician lives to appreciate it, and make it to live."

His instruction of the lighthouse-keeper's daughter was by this time a well-known fact in Pointhaven, and was, of course, the topic of much conversation. And most of those who knew Hazel only by name took her master severely to task, among themselves, for encouraging a girl of that sort in ideas which were far beyond her station, and could only bring her to trouble in the end. It was not likely the girl would

remember any of the fine things he taught her more than a few months at the most, but she would *pretend* to know a great deal more than anyone else of her class, and would just be filled with conceit and pride, and be unfitted for any work in life to which she could, in her station, ever hope to be called. Others, who had seen her occasionally, and had heard something of her "queer nature," shook their heads, and thought it a pity that Mr. Everard should encourage her in her fancies. They would die a natural death when the girl was older and had a little more sense.

Mr. Everard, however, pursued his own course; indeed, he saw so little of his neighbours generally, that he did not hear the criticisms passed upon his conduct. One evening in May, however, he had been invited by the Ropers to meet a few friends in a quiet way at their house, and Mrs. Roper, at the tea-table, introduced the subject of the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, with a hope, it must be confessed, of convincing Mr. Everard of the error of his ways, and discouraging him in the task, which was so generally considered a mistaken one.

"Does your pupil still come to you for lessons, Mr. Everard?" she asked. "I mean the girl from the lighthouse? And do you really find her capable of understanding what you teach—music and such things?"

"We spend a pleasant hour together two or three times a-week," answered Mr. Everard, "to our mutual advantage. In capability, I assure you, Mrs. Roper, the lighthouse-keeper's daughter will bear comparison with girls of her age whose circumstances are very different to her own; indeed, her mind is of a superior order to those of most of the young ladies I have come across in my time."

"What will Lilian Thursfield say to that?" said Mrs. Roper, looking across at her young guest, with an amused smile. "Will you not claim to be considered an exception to that experience of Mr. Everard's, my love?"

"Nay, I said *most* of them," said Mr. Everard. "Miss Lilian knows I intended no reference to present company; and if she is questioned, I think she will confess to being on my side."

"Yes, Mrs. Roper," said Lilian, "I think what Mr. Everard says of Hazel Manlinson is quite true. I am getting to know her now, and I think she is much more interesting to talk to than any girl I know."

"Young girls like you, Lilian, my dear," said her aunt Winifred, "are very easily led by their feelings, and their opinions are therefore not reliable. And as for the opinions of *men*," she mentally added, "*they* are not to be trusted in the least."

"The question is," said Mrs. Roper, in her good-humoured tones, "whether we are justified in encouraging young people of Hazel Manlinson's position in a wish to acquire knowledge which is totally unnecessary for them, and which, in most instances, is likely to fill their heads with false pride, and unfit them for their duties in life? You will pardon my interference, Mr. Everard, but I must confess that I have felt some amount of anxiety as to the effect upon the girl's future which will be produced by your kind interest in her."

"That is my point too," said Miss Winifred. "Quixotic interest, I call it. I don't approve of raising people of the lower orders above their station."

"Nor do I," answered Mr. Everard, with a smile. "I quite agree with Mrs. Roper, that to introduce among people of the kind she means a system of education which is beyond their powers of mind to grasp, and is wholly unnecessary for them in their station and callings, is both injudicious and productive of evil results rather than good. As a rule, I believe those people have no desire for such an education, and where a desire is shown, I should be very careful not to encourage it until I was convinced that it

was genuine, and was accompanied by great natural gifts, which had doubtless created it."

"But how are you to be sure that there is the natural gift until you have already given the encouragement which brings it out?" asked Mrs. Roper. "And may you not even then be deceived by appearances? Here in Point-haven I know that there is a large class of young people who are trying in every way to imitate their masters and mistresses, and who might show a great apparent desire for instruction in things for which their minds are quite unfitted, simply that they may think themselves, and be thought by others, as good as their betters. Now, to encourage them in these ideas would be simply to ruin them. I am sure I often feel quite disgusted at the airs which the girls in the shops put on, and at the forward independence of manner which is spreading among them. No doubt many of them would be highly pleased to learn a smattering of music and other things, which they could boast of among their companions, and forget as soon as they had learnt. How can you be sure that the desire arises from natural power of mind?"

"I think I could tell without much difficulty," answered Mr. Everard, with a smile. "I do not wish to be mistaken, Mrs. Roper, and I assure you that my ideas on this subject agree fully with your own. Nevertheless I feel that I am doing quite right in instructing Hazel Manlinson. On that point I am immovable."

"Because," said Mrs. Roper, "you feel perfectly convinced that she *has* this natural gift of which you speak?"

"Because," answered Mr. Everard, "there are people here and there in the world who must not be judged according to ordinary standards, and this daughter of the lighthouse people is one of them. She is as totally unlike the people of her class as my friend, Miss Lilian, here—in refinement of mind and intelligence, as well as in speech

and manner. She has, for instance, among other gifts, an intense love of music, which I, as a lover of music myself, should feel it a positive cruelty to suppress and suffer to run to waste."

"Well, how do you account for such talent and such refinement?" asked Miss Raymond. "My sister and Lilian are infatuated about the girl. I do not know her, except by their accounts."

Mr. Everard shook his head. "That I cannot explain," he said; "it has puzzled me from the time I first knew her. Such instances are very rare—so rare, indeed, that I have fancied—nay, I will not confess my fancies; you will say I am too old to be romantic."

"Then you quite intend to continue instructing the girl?" said Mrs. Roper. "You are not afraid of its effect upon her future?"

"I fear that my intentions are obstinate," said Mr. Everard. "I am too much interested in the poor child to wish her lessons to cease; and there is, besides, a *mutual* advantage in them, you know. The truth is, that when our acquaintance was first formed, the child's voice and manner so misled me, that, forgetting her statement that she was the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, I asked her to write out some music for me—which she of course could not do. And then discovering the love she had for music, I proposed—partly, I must confess, with a view to my own advantage—to teach her. The first few minutes convinced me of the child's gift, and her gratitude and delight the other day, when she succeeded in writing out correctly some little things for me, quite touched me."

"You mean to say, then," said Mrs. Roper, "that she is actually useful already as your amanuensis?"

"I do," he answered with a smile; "and will increase in usefulness every day, I am sure."

"Not a bad bargain, really!" said Mr. Roper, "resulting

in so much satisfaction to both parties! But, my dear Everard, is an amanuensis so difficult to find that you have had the patience to educate one for yourself?"

The blind man's face flushed a little. "It has always been hard to find one," he said. "You know I am not well acquainted with the people here generally. (They have taken no pains to make me so," he *might* have added.) "I had one or two things on my mind at the time," he continued, "and the kind help rendered to me by my little friend in the street made me bold. However, young Mr. Miller kindly relieved me of those things during some evenings he spent with me."

"Ah, he was a fine-looking fellow," said Mr. Roper. "There was a *good* expression in his face which particularly pleased me. He was——"

"Then, Mr. Everard," said Miss Raymond, rather unceremoniously interrupting the vicar, "you don't mean to pay any attention to the opinion of Pointhaven on the subject of your pupil?"

"I believe not," he answered, with a bow, "for I think that I know Hazel better than Pointhaven does—which, you will think, is a bold thing for a blind man to say, perhaps."

"I do not pretend to know her," said Miss Winifred, "and I do not put faith in all Pointhaven says myself; but what I heard of this girl, before my sister and Lilian became so infatuated about her, did not show her in a very favourable light."

"I have not been to the lighthouse for a long while," said Mrs. Roper, "nor has Mr. Roper; we cannot get so far. Mr. Jervis visits the Manlinsons occasionally. We try not to neglect any of our parishioners, but Perilpoint is very difficult of access for elderly folks."

"I never see the daughter," said Mr. Jervis. "I failed to make any impression on her at the time of her running

away from school, and I fear she avoids those who would wish to speak to her for her good. I hope the kind interest shown in her by Mr. Everard and Miss Lilian is bringing her to a less wilful and insubordinate state of mind."

Mr. Everard stated the reason which Hazel had given to himself and Mr. Miller for that insubordinate act, which Mr. Jervis had never forgiven, and the idea created some amusement.

"Mr. Everard wishes us to conclude," said Mr. Jervis, "that the lighthouse-keeper's daughter is, in fact, a new specimen of humanity, and, as such, is to be reared to the best advantage, in the manner which is most likely to ensure long preservation. Will your system ensure it, Mr. Everard?"

"I hope so," answered the musician, with a smile. "Consider her what you like, Mr. Jervis; perhaps your conclusion is the best we can arrive at. As for the *future*, about which I was brought to task a little while ago, I can only say, that is in God's hands—not mine. And as I said before, perhaps my *own* ideas with regard to my pupil's possible future might be considered romantic."

"Oh, Mr. Everard, do tell us what they are!" said Lilian, eagerly.

But Mr. Everard shook his head smilingly, and was impenetrable.





CHAPTER XV.

"'Twas time and griefs that fram'd him thus."

—*Timon of Athens.*

"**R**OINTHAVEN is going to be very gay next week, mamma," said Katie Stuart, the following Saturday morning, as she and Constance and their mother sat together in the parish-room, after the little boys' lessons were over, busy in covering a large pile of new books which had just arrived for the parish library.

"What is going to happen?" asked Mrs. Stuart. "Oh, I suppose the militia are coming. Dear me! I had forgotten all about them."

"Yes, they are coming on Monday morning," said Katie; "and there will be a splendid procession through the town to the Dolphin Hotel. They are coming from Otterbury, so they will enter the town by the north road, and come right past St. Philip's, and they will be here all the week, as usual."

"Who told you the particulars of their movements?" asked Mrs. Stuart.

"Miss Fortescue," answered Katie. "Constance and I met her in the fruit market this morning, before lessons—she took care to let us know she had gone merely to *look* at the pretty scene, not to buy!—and she told us they are going

to have a great ball at Seaview House on Tuesday night, in honour of the officers, who are all to be present. I wonder if the Delanys will be invited, Constance? Do you think so?"

There was a tinge of jealousy in Katie's voice, but Constance answered quietly—"I expect so. It won't matter to us, Katie. I hope they will be, because I know they would be very disappointed if they were not."

"I don't believe you ever feel envious of people," said Katie, in mingled tones of admiration and discontent. "But, mamma, Connie *was* quite angry with Miss Fortescue this morning."

"She was talking about the ball, mamma," said Constance, in an indignant tone, "and said, with such a horrid scornful smile, that she supposed it was no use to ask *us*. I was angry with her, because she knows so well that we don't go to balls, that I knew it was only said just to provoke us, and make us pity ourselves, as she thought, for having to miss the fun!"

"What did you say?" asked Mrs. Stuart, smiling.

"Oh, Connie said, in her quietly dignified way—'Thank you, it would be quite useless,'" said Katie; "and Miss Fortescue stared at her, and then turned to me and whispered that she knew *I* should enjoy it, and she so wished I might be allowed to accept an invitation. But though I *had* just been wishing the very thing, I was as angry as Constance at her disagreeable speech, and I told her I would much rather not go, which is not true at the bottom of my heart, mamma, and I am envious of the girls who *are* going."

"There is not much to be envious about, dear Katie," said Mrs. Stuart, "and I do not think the Fortescues are the best companions for you at any time, nor does your father."

"Miss Fortescue had on the loveliest new hat you can

imagine," said Katie, with a sigh. "That is why she came to the market, I believe, to show it off. I looked at it, and wished for one like it, I know, so I ought not to say anything."

"It is no use wishing for all the Fortescues have, my dear," said her mother; "we have not their means, and must be content with what we can afford. Your own dress is always pretty and suitable, and you must be glad of the comforts you yourself enjoy, instead of being so ready to envy others, Katie."

"Oh, I know we are very comfortable," said Katie, with a self-satisfied air. "I wouldn't change with anybody; but it must be nice to have as much money as the Fortescues have, and to feel that your beautiful dress and furniture, and splendid horses and carriages, are envied by everybody."

"Not everybody, Katie," said Constance. "I don't envy them, and Lilian Thursfield doesn't, and I am sure papa and mamma don't."

"Well, *most* people do," said Katie, a little impatiently. "And it is quite true, Constance, I *do* like to be envied."

"I know you do, Katie," said her mother, gravely, "and I am sorry for it. I fear sometimes you quite forget that a clergyman's daughter should set an example of humility and quiet behaviour—not of pride, and self-sufficiency, and love of show."

"Am I proud, and vain, and self-sufficient, mamma?" asked Katie, in a wounded tone.

"That would be a harsh thing to say," answered Mrs. Stuart, kindly, "but I sometimes fear lest you should become so, Katie. At present I do not think that you are much more than thoughtless; but you need to be careful. I should not like a daughter of mine to set an example of worldliness and vanity."

"May I not like to have pretty things then?" asked Katie, "and to have fun and amusement? You used not

to be so strict, mamma; I thought you liked us to enjoy ourselves."

"You know I do like it," answered her mother, "and I do not condemn your liking of pretty things and amusement. It is quite natural, and I believe Constance likes both as much as you do. You cannot complain of being kept from amusement and pleasure. I only wish you to be careful not to give way to a love of society which we do not think fit for you, and to wish that Katie Stuart and her surroundings should be envied by their neighbours, in the same manner as the family at Seaview House."

Katie blushed. Such feelings had perhaps been indulged in almost more than she was herself quite aware of, and she had had no idea that they had been so apparent to her mother. She covered books for a few minutes in silence, and then, with her usual vehemence, jumped up and threw her arms round Mrs. Stuart's neck, exclaiming—

"I'm not half so good as Constance, mamma, and I have all sorts of bad feelings, sometimes, I know. I am often quite angry because the Fortescues are richer than we are, and because people think so much of them. But I'll try not to wish to be first in everything—I will really, mamma."

"I hope you will," said Mrs. Stuart, fondly. "We cannot all be number one, Katie, and it should not make us angry and discontented. Ask God to help you, my child. Now let us get on with our books; I want to finish them all this morning."

"Katie didn't finish about next week, mamma," said Constance. "There is to be a grand servants' ball at the Fortescues on Wednesday night, and the officers are going to give a dinner on Thursday; and on Friday they finish up with a concert."

"Who is getting up the concert this time?" asked Mrs. Stuart.

"The All Saints' people," said Constance; "and Major Carlisle and his daughters are coming to help. And won't Lilian be pleased, mamma? the Kirbys have persuaded Mr. Everard to promise to play."

"Well, we will go to the concert," said Mrs. Stuart. "It will be good, if Major Carlisle and Mr. Everard take part in it. You had better ask Lilian to spend Monday morning with you, and you can go out together and see the regiment come in."

"We'll go to the Ropers' as usual," said Katie, "and then we shall see it a long way off, from their top windows. I like the militia week. We will go and see them exercise in the meadows too, won't we, mamma?"

"We will have all the fun we can," said Mrs. Stuart. "Constance, will you take that pudding to old Harris, on the Common, this afternoon? I dare say Katie and the little boys will go with you."

"Oh, Frank has planned to go there to-day with Constance," said Katie, mischievously. "It is such a nice lonely walk! He sat up very late last night to finish his sermon, on purpose that he might have nothing to do this afternoon."

"Very well," said Mrs. Stuart, smiling; "then you had better take Robbie and Alfred for a good walk on the beach. Nurse will be too busy to go out."

"That will be nice," said Katie. "I daresay I shall meet Lilian, and then I can tell her all about the militia. May I call Robbie now, mamma? He begged so hard that he might help to seal the books."

Robbie was accordingly admitted, and gave his valuable assistance till it became evident that the work would not be finished by dinner-time at his rate of working, and he was sent back to the nursery, with the loan of two sticks of red sealing-wax, which, to the fertile imagination of himself and Alfred, made excellent soldiers.

Pointhaven presented a gay appearance on the following Monday morning. Flags were hung out from almost every window in the town, and numbers of people in holiday attire thronged the streets to witness the arrival of the regiment of militia. Pointhaven was always enthusiastic on these occasions, and a hearty cheer greeted the approach of the well-ordered cavalcade, who in scarlet uniform looked certainly picturesque enough to warrant the public excitement and admiration.

The lighthouse, though distant, was not behind its neighbours in politeness, and a gay flag on the summit waved forth its welcome, while the inhabitants themselves had rowed across the bay early in the morning, that they might not lose the sight of the procession. Hazel always liked the militia week. She enjoyed the sight of the bright uniforms and the fine horses which the officers rode, and she liked watching the sports which took place in the meadows every day, and enjoyed especially the music played by the band every afternoon, in Seaview Crescent Gardens, and every evening on the beach. The —shire Militia had a very good band, and this week of music had been counted upon year by year by Hazel as long as she could remember as one of her greatest treats and pleasures. As she was walking through Cliff Street on Thursday afternoon, on her way to the gardens, a servant-girl, scrubbing a doorstep, accosted her.

"Hazel Manlinson," she called, in a loud whisper, "is that you? It's just about ages since I see *you* last! Do just stop a bit, I can tell you fine things. What a pity you ain't in service! You didn't go to the servants' ball now, of course?"

"No," said Hazel; "I heard about it, but I wouldn't have cared to go if I had been asked. Did you go?"

"No," said the girl, "I ain't high enough for such things, they fine folks think. But I *did* think the kitchen-

maid at the house might have got me in, such friends as we've always been! My! it was just splendid! I slipped away for half-an-hour this morning before cook was down—we're dreadful late o' mornings, you know—and the kitchen-maid, that's Sally Jones, she'd promised to wait for me in the yard at the house, and she told me all about it. Wouldn't I just have liked to have gone! You wouldn't guess what a supper there was, Hazel Manlinson! And they didn't stop dancin' till 'twas daylight, I can tell you. Don't talk to me about not wantin' to go! You're as jealous this minute as I be."

"Indeed I'm not," said Hazel. "I'm sorry you couldn't go, if you wanted to so much, but I'm glad I didn't."

"Well, the grapes is sour," said the girl, with a laugh, "for you ain't a servant, and so you couldn't have gone if you'd cried your eyes out. Such goin's on as there was the night before, too, for the gentlefolks! The room was all trimmed up with flowers and green stuff like you never saw, and the upper-room—Sally, she got a peep at it on the sly—and she says there was just about *everythin'* on the tables! And they was all blazin'-like with glass an' silver, such things as you and me wouldn't see no sense in. Sally don't know what they does with 'em all, 'cept look at 'em. But there, you see, they say as the General brought home with him half the gold there was in the Injies."

Hazel laughed. "That's a good big place," she said. "I don't expect it would be very easy to bring away half the gold out of it."

"'Twould be greedy enough, anyhow, wouldn't it?" said her companion. "The General has got a *sight* of money, though, I can tell you. Hazel, you ain't going there to the gardens with *that* hat on?"

"Yes, I am," said Hazel, "why not?"

"Not one bit of feather or flower in it!" said the girl, disdainfully. "And all the milishy about in the streets,

and the girls you'll see in the gardens, all dressed in their best. Why, you won't look nothin', and you with the prettiest face of them all, Hazel Manlinson! Do get a bit of feather now, or something, to show yourself off a bit."

"My face is my own," said Hazel, proudly. "The militia have nothing to do with it. I'm going to hear the band play, not to have my hat looked at."

"My! what a queer girl you are!" exclaimed the housemaid. "Folks say you're as proud as lucifers, and I believe it's true. But for all that you're as pretty as you can be, and you oughtn't to go so plain-like."

"I can't afford to buy fine feathers," said Hazel, "and I wouldn't if I could. You all think you look like ladies when you put on fine clothes, but you don't, Kitty, not a bit."

"Come, get along!" said Kitty, "since you won't take a bit of advice. Missis will be out soon to see who I be talkin' to. Don't you see I'm cleaning the steps?"

"I suppose you *were*," said Hazel, with a half-smile, "but you stopped to call me. Good-bye, Kitty!"

Kitty looked after her with an expression of envy, and Hazel hurried on to the gardens, which she reached just in time to hear the band strike up the first notes of Mr. Everard's "March." Hazel loved that "March," and a bright colour came into her face, and a light into her eyes, as she involuntarily stood beating time with one foot to the blind man's music. And although she was in a quiet corner, hidden from public view as much as possible, her face, un-set-off though it was by flowers and feathers, and shaded only by a plain white straw hat, with a band of blue ribbon, attracted far more attention than she was aware of, and certainly more than was attracted by the bold looks and flaunting dress of some of Kitty's bosom-friends.

The music was over at four o'clock, and after the band had left the gardens Hazel amused herself by watching the crowd disperse—the groups of twos and threes, who had been sitting about on benches in the gardens; the children, who had been executing dances of their own, to the music, under the trees; the carriages, which had stood in a row outside, having brought families from the neighbouring parishes to hear the music, and to chat with their friends—often at the same time; and the people of the lower classes, who, not admitted into the gardens, had formed a sort of wall around them, pressing their faces close against the railings, in their eagerness to see and hear—and in some cases *to be seen* and heard. Hazel was always amused and interested in watching a crowd of people. She liked to look at their faces, and make up stories about them, and a very favourite amusement of hers was to put together the fragments of conversation which she heard from different persons, and see what she could make of the whole. She was engaged in this pastime—amusing, if not profitable—when she caught sight of Mr. Everard just leaving the gardens, leaning on his boy's arm. He came right past her, and she could not resist saying to him, eagerly—

“Oh, sir, have you been in the gardens? Did you hear the soldiers play your ‘March?’ And didn’t you think it sounded beautiful?”

“You here, my little friend?” said the organist. “Why, that is not for me to say! I did hear my ‘March,’ certainly, and thought the band played it just as I should have wished. And so *you* thought it sounded beautiful?”

“Yes, sir, *very*!” said Hazel, enthusiastically. “And I heard the people near me say that they liked the first piece best of all, and that was your ‘March!’”

Hazel spoke triumphantly, and Mr. Everard smiled.

"So you like bands as well as all other music?" he said. "How often do you come to hear this one?"

"I come every day," said Hazel; "I always do, every year. And I listen to them when they play in the evening, too. I sit on the rocks, near the lighthouse, and the music sounds so pretty, coming across the water! I wish you could hear it there, sir!"

"I have no doubt it sounds very pleasant," said Mr. Everard. "I can fancy that most things sound or look pleasant on your lighthouse rocks. If I had my eyesight, I would visit them sometimes, and help you to look for treasures. What have you found lately?"

"I found a beautiful sea-anemone this morning," said Hazel, with sparkling eyes, "a large salmon-coloured one, and I have put it in a big glass bottle full of water, to keep it."

"You shall bring it to me to-morrow," said Mr. Everard, "and we will talk about it. I shall not be able to *see* it, but you will, and we will make a lesson out of it."

"I wish you could see it," said Hazel, regretfully; "it is such a beauty! And I wish you could see my shells and seaweeds; I find such curious shells sometimes. May I bring some of them, too, and if I tell you what they look like, you will be able to tell me their names perhaps."

"I will try what I can do," said Mr. Everard; "I used to keep a great many of those things once, and my little daughter and I used to hunt for them together, and learn all we could about them. That is why I like to teach you."

"Did your daughter die very long ago?" Hazel ventured to ask, timidly. "I am sorry she died."

"She died just ten years ago," said Mr. Everard, with a sigh, "and she was your age—sixteen—when she died. I had lost my wife years before, and my little daughter was everything to me. It was a very bitter blow."

"I suppose God wanted her!" said Hazel, simply. "But it must have been dreadful. And hadn't you any more children, sir?"

"No more," he answered, "only my Violet. Ah! it was worse to lose her than to lose my sight afterwards. *That* seemed hard, but as I was to lose both, I thank God that he took my child first, and spared her the pain of leaving her poor father in total darkness. The sunlight is very beautiful, Hazel! We hardly think *how* beautiful it is till it is lost to us forever."

Hazel shuddered. "And was it a fever?" she asked, in a low voice.

"My Violet died of a bad fever," said Mr. Everard; "and when they had laid her away out of sight, by her mother's side in the churchyard, the fever seized me too. And when I woke up after a long illness, I found that I was blind."

"Couldn't the doctors make you see again?" asked Hazel, wistfully.

"No," he answered; "I shall never see any more, till I see my wife and little daughter in heaven. But I am very thankful not to have been *always* blind, Hazel. I could see this beautiful earth and the wonderful things in it for a great many years of my life, and now I am going down the hill, I must not murmur if I must go in the dark."

Hazel was silent, and a sob rose in her throat. She looked round at the trees in their lovely spring dresses of pale green, and at the rocky cliffs, sloping down to the beach, and at the bright blue and purple sea beyond, and that darkness seemed to her very terrible. But Mr. Everard's face was patient and beautiful, only there was a wistful expression in the kind sightless eyes, which were lifted for a moment as if trying to pierce the shadows, which made the tears start into Hazel's eyes.

"I have made my little friend sad," said Mr. Everard, kindly, finding that she did not speak. "I should not

have done so, just after the bright music we have heard, which ought to have made us forget our troubles. Will your father bring you to hear the music to-morrow night, in the town hall, do you think ?”

“I will ask him,” said Hazel, “and I know he will. He isn’t going to fish to-morrow, so he will not be tired in the evening. And it is only threepence to pay for *us*. I must come and hear you play, sir !”

“And we have a lesson in the afternoon,” said Mr. Everard, “music and sea-anemones and shells ! You will not forget them ?”

“Oh no,” said Hazel ; “and after that I shall give the sea-anemone to Miss Lilian. She wants one very much, and there are better ones at Perilpoint than anywhere else about here.”

“You are fond of Miss Lilian ?” said Mr. Everard.

“Yes !” answered Hazel, enthusiastically. “She is so pretty and so good ! And she is very kind to me ; I love Miss Lilian very much. But I wish she was my *own* little girl.”

“Your own little girl !” repeated Mr. Everard, wonderingly.

“The little girl on the beach that day, with Mr. Miller, don’t you remember, sir ?” explained Hazel. “Miss Lilian is so much like that little girl—only *her* name is Thursfield.

“Ah ! I remember,” said Mr. Everard, “that Mr. Miller found out you were an old acquaintance. Good-night, my child ; I hope you will enjoy the music across the water this evening.”

And when Hazel had gone, he repeated to himself—
“Thursfield ! it is strange, very strange. I should like to find out, but I do not like to ask, for fear of giving pain. Thursfield had two children, I know—a girl and a boy—but if she is *his* daughter, what a difference in character

between father and child ! I wonder what became of him ? I am afraid it was foolish in me to act as I did ; however, it is done, and I have enough—just enough to keep me going—a shabby organist ! And I promised his brother before he died to do what I could ; I did not know how useless it is to help *some* people. Ah well ! I had no hand in the final matter, and I am glad of it. I could not very well spare all I *did* spare, but for his brother's sake I wished to save the poor fellow from disgrace, and I am glad I did not come forward as Ratcliffe did, with my claims. His were greater than mine, and I think he was right, for the poor fellow would only have gone on from bad to worse, I am afraid. I never heard of his death, but it is probable that it has occurred, for I do not hear much now of the outer world. Poor Miss Lilian !—if it is as I imagine. And the boy—I wonder what he is doing ? She never told me she had a brother. Ah well ! I will keep my thoughts to myself ; it is better so."





CHAPTER XVI

"Why dost thou seek me out?"

"To vex thee."

—*Timon of Athens.*

"When I know not what else to do, I'll see thee again."

—*Ibid.*

THE concert given in honour of the militia was largely attended, and Hazel and her father *did* form part of the audience. Hazel had never heard Mr. Everard play the piano before, and her enthusiasm on his behalf rose to a higher pitch than ever. She got little sleep that night, but lay awake, thinking over the delicious music she had heard, till day dawned. The pianos to which she had listened through windows had given her great delight, but they had never sounded quite as Mr. Everard's fingers had made this one sound.

Next day there were grand sports in the meadows, and on the following Monday the scarlet uniforms bade Point-haven farewell, and marched out as they had come in, with flags flying, and handkerchiefs waving after them—marching too to the well-known strains of Mr. Everard's "March!" The blind composer listened at his window to his own music, and felt happy. The success of his "March" was sweet to him—sweeter than people with plenty of outside interests could understand. For he lived

in his music, and that "March" was a little bit of himself. It expressed certain of his own thoughts more clearly to himself than any words, and every note had its own meaning. The blind man felt glad that out of his poor, bare, little room he could send forth something to carry brightness and pleasure to the ears of the outside world. It had been so little that he had had to do with that world lately, but it was more than it had been a year ago, and his life was certainly brightening—by slow degrees, perhaps—but brightening still. And the past few years had been so desolate, that the occasional rays of light which broke in upon the present one were stronger and more precious to him than they might seem to be of themselves.

Mr. Everard sat down before his little organ, and his thoughts and his fingers mused together over those past years—over those especially which had passed between the time of his losing his beloved daughter and the time of his settling in Pointhaven—during which he had lost little by little all he possessed of worldly wealth, till he had been forced to take the position which now supported him. That little organ might have told strange tales, and explained the cause of its master's shabby clothes in a different manner to that which report suggested; but it possessed its master's confidence, and to his mind no other friend could sympathise with him so well.

Pointhaven felt dull and spiritless for a week or so after its late excitements, and was loth to resume its own quiet routine. But it recovered itself, as the impression of scarlet uniforms became less vivid, and people began to settle down again to their usual occupations, and to speculate upon the probable number of visitors who would choose Pointhaven for their summer resort. Lilian Thurfild had thoughts and speculations of her own to occupy and to trouble her mind. Arthur had promised to come down, if possible, during the summer, for a few days, but

he had lately written to tell her that there was a great deal of business on hand, and that he had no chance of getting a holiday before late in the autumn. Lilian found it hard to bear this disappointment patiently, for since June had begun she had been counting away the days, hoping that each one would bring her a letter from her brother telling her that she might expect soon to see him. It seemed so hard to have only that one brother, and to see so little of him. It was October when she had last seen him, and now she might not see him till October again—a whole year !

The summer months dragged on wearily enough. Lilian's secret—that secret which Arthur worked so hard to do away with—weighed upon her spirits more than either of her aunts knew. Without him at her side to help her to bear it, it seemed at times almost unbearable. Not to her Aunt Evelyn, sympathising though she was, could Lilian fully explain all her trouble ; she did not care to talk about it to anyone except Arthur ; it hardly seemed to her right to do so, and at any rate it was too painful. But her Aunt Evelyn noticed her low spirits after Arthur's letter came, though she did not know its contents, and was distressed at her want of appetite, frequent headaches and pale cheeks, and she decided that change of air would be the best thing in the world for her niece. She was also not slow in imagining that a change to *London* would probably be more beneficial than to any other place, and resolved, not without a little timidity, to suggest the idea to her sister. Some people are wilfully blind, and Miss Raymond had her own reasons for not being able to see that anything was the matter with Lilian. Her penetrating grey eyes had not failed to notice that her niece was pale and depressed, and quieter than usual ; but Miss Winifred sternly bade those same eyes not to notice things which she had not given them permission to notice, and the eyes had no power to question their stern mistress's authority.

Miss Evelyn screwed up her courage to its highest point one afternoon when Lillian had gone to the town to take her organ lesson, and, bolder in her niece's cause than she would have been in her own, remarked—"Do you not think, Winifred, that Lillian is looking delicate? She suffers much from headache, and has not seemed at all in her usual spirits lately."

"Girls often look delicate," replied Miss Raymond, moving her knitting needles backwards and forwards energetically, "and especially during the spring. I have not observed anything unusual in Lillian. Do not put fancies into her head, I beg you, Evelyn! Girls often get an idea that delicacy of health is interesting, and though Lillian is a good girl, it is not to be supposed that she has not weaknesses."

"I do not think Lillian has a weakness of that sort," said Miss Evelyn, mildly. "I think her weakness at present is an actual one. She has never complained to me, but I have noticed it for some time past. I have been thinking, Winifred"—and Miss Evelyn hesitated, and glanced deprecatingly at her sister—"I have been thinking that a change might do her good, and bring back her spirits."

"What is the matter with her spirits?" asked Miss Winifred, sharply. "I sometimes lose my spirits. We cannot expect to be always in the same frame of mind. The young especially are subject to elation and depression of spirits, with very little cause."

"Lillian has reason for low spirits, I think, Winifred," said Miss Evelyn, gravely. "She bears her trouble beautifully, but we cannot be surprised if it is at times almost too much for her, surely."

"I am not surprised," said Miss Winifred, imperturbably; "that is just what I said, my dear Evelyn. At the same time it is foolish in Lillian to give way to feelings which are utterly wasted and useless, and she must not on any account be encouraged in them."

"But she is really not very well just at present," persisted Miss Evelyn, gaining courage in her eagerness to win her point. "Do not you think yourself, Winifred, that a change of air and scene would be good for her—a short visit to London, for instance?"

Miss Raymond laid her knitting on her lap, took her spectacles off her nose, and gazed at her sister calmly, with an expression which said, "Go on, I am prepared for anything!"

"There is the Academy, you know," continued Miss Evelyn. "Lilian has not seen it for two or three years, and she would very much enjoy visiting it again. The pictures are said to be unusually good this year, you remember."

Miss Raymond delivered herself of a long breath, and found voice.

"London and the Academy!" she exclaimed. "And it is already near the end of June! A nice season to leave the seaside and go to London! Who is to chaperone Lilian, pray? Am I to be dragged about street after street in the blazing sun, to look at shop windows and concert bills?—and my new summer bonnet to be spoiled as soon as it is bought—I have only once worn it—by that filthy London smoke?"

"The sun is not very blazing yet," said Miss Evelyn, smiling; "we are having a cool month. And the Academy will not be closed just yet. I would go with Lilian, if you did not care to do so, but I thought perhaps you also might like the change; I was away only in April, with Mary Thursfield, and I felt all the better when I came back."

Mary Thursfield, it is as well to explain in passing, was the widow of the elder and only brother of Lilian's father, who had died about ten years before our story commences, leaving no children. Mrs. Thursfield had been a great invalid for years, in consequence of which Arthur and Lilian knew very little of her.

"I do not like changes," said Miss Winifred. "I can always make myself contented at home with my own resources, and I should think Lilian might do the same. We have not been so long in Pointhaven that she needs yet to tire of it, and I think it is all nonsense. If she is unwell and wants appetite, a little of my mixture will soon put her right; I have never known it to fail in restoring appetite and strength. Don't talk to me of London, pray, Evelyn! I have no desire to place myself in the vicinity of organ-menders. Imagine our being stopped in Regent Street by an untidy, gloveless individual, whom Lilian embraces fervently—an individual with *dusty* hands and clothing!"

Miss Winifred shuddered at the prospect, and resumed her knitting-needles in sheer desperation.

"I do not think that would be very likely," said Miss Evelyn, mildly. "I am sure, dear Winifred, that Arthur would avoid giving you public annoyance again. You might secure against it by sending Lilian to visit him, as soon as possible after your arrival, to let him know of your being in London."

Miss Evelyn ventured this last suggestion in the most unconcerned of gentle voices, apparently much absorbed at the time in the gathers of the baby's frock which she was making. But it may, nevertheless, have been from nervousness that she broke the thread, and had to run in a fresh one.

"I think you are out of your senses, Evelyn," said Miss Winifred, in horror. "Allow Lilian to run about London alone, in search of the obscure lodgings occupied by a member of an organ-building firm! Have you any *more* suggestions to make?" This question was asked in a tone of calm resignation, not to say of scorn.

"No more, dear Winifred," said Miss Evelyn, rather sadly. "But I hoped you might have thought my plan a good one. Think—it was in the October of last year, not

since then—that Lilian saw her brother—her only brother, Winifred.”

“If an *only* brother disgraces himself, the more shame to him!” retorted Miss Raymond, sharply. “But it is always the way. Men never think of anyone but themselves and their own whims and caprices. Everyone else may be sacrificed, and Arthur is beginning early to tread in the selfish steps of his race.”

“Selfish! Oh, Winifred!” murmured her sister, reproachfully. “Can you call Arthur selfish? Think of his hard work and self-denial. Think how you brought him up—in every luxury—and how he has sacrificed all his comforts and all his prospects for the sake of——”

“Of one who will never thank him for it,” said Miss Winifred, “and who, if once relieved from his present condition, will return to it in a year at the very latest.”

“Arthur has hardly a penny to call his own,” continued Miss Evelyn, taking no notice of this interruption; “not a penny to spend upon the luxuries and pleasures to which he was accustomed in his boyhood. He saves all that is not needed for the barest necessities.”

“The more fool he,” said Miss Winifred, concisely; and rising majestically from her seat by the open French window, she threw it open wider, and walked out on to the lawn, to talk to the gardener about her rose-bushes.

Miss Evelyn sighed, but she knew her sister pretty well by this time, and did not yet despair of the realisation of her scheme. No more was said by either of the sisters on the subject that day, and to all outward appearance Miss Raymond had dismissed it from her mind completely. Next morning Lilian was somewhat startled, as she sat in the morning-room with her aunts, painting a group of flowers, when Miss Winifred said quite suddenly—

“Lilian, my dear, your aunt and I have observed that

you have not been looking quite so well lately as we should wish, and we think a little change would be pleasant for you. So pack your things to-day, and put in everything that is nice and pretty and fit for a visit to London. We shall start to-morrow, and shall then have about a fortnight in which to visit the Academy and other places of interest before they close. It is good for young people to visit London occasionally ; it is good for the mind, and you are now at an age to appreciate keenly any object of interest."

While her aunt had been speaking Lilian's colour had come and gone, and the very mention of London had made her heart throb with joy ; but she soon recollected that a visit to that place with her Aunt *Winifred* would be very little use to her or Arthur, and her heart sank. It would be torture to go to London and not be allowed to see her brother.

"Why don't you speak, child?" asked Miss Raymond. "Most girls would have jumped at the prospect of a fortnight of sight-seeing, and you don't even say you would like the visit! What is the matter?"

"Aunt Winifred," said Lilian, speaking with difficulty, "I am afraid you would not let me see Arthur if I went with you to London, and I could not go and stay there where he is and not see him. I would much rather not go at all!"

Her voice quivered, and tears started to her eyes and fell slowly upon her drawing. Miss Raymond looked slightly taken aback. She had thought that in the first excitement and pleasure of the prospect of a visit to London, Lilian would surely have forgotten Arthur for the while, and accepted the proposal joyfully, without demur of any kind. But here was Lilian, with her absurd romantic notions, making a difficulty at the very outset!

"It is always Arthur—Arthur—from morning to night, Lilian," she said, impatiently. "What has Arthur ever

done for you—except to disgrace you—that you should be for ever thinking and dreaming of *him*? It is not every girl who has the opportunity of visiting London during the season, and instead of being pleased and grateful at the prospect, you immediately bring up *Arthur*!”

“He is my brother, Aunt Winifred,” said Lilian, her gentle blue eyes flashing. “And I cannot go to London if I may not see him. I should like to go very much, and I am very grateful to you and Aunt Evelyn for thinking of it, but I should be miserable, going about to see all sorts of sights, and not seeing my brother. You must not ask me to do it, Aunt Winifred; I cannot.”

“Go and pack your things,” said Miss Winifred, “and we will talk on this subject afterwards.”

And Lilian obeyed. She thought it best to do so at once, and say no more just at present. Most likely her aunt would relent, if she were left to herself, and nothing more were said to her about Arthur; and at any rate, if to-morrow she were still obdurate, Lilian could unpack her boxes again. But she did not think in her heart that it would be necessary; her aunt could not be so cruel! And she set to work to arrange her things, and stow them away in her trunk, with a heart throbbing fast at the mere anticipation of actually seeing Arthur so much sooner after all than she expected. The anticipation *should* be realised. Lilian made up her mind more and more firmly upon that point with every fresh article she deposited in her trunk, and when she went downstairs to dinner, felt as certain that she would be allowed to visit Arthur as if her aunt had told her so. But she did not say a word on the subject all dinner time; neither did Miss Raymond. It was not till after tea that her aunt remarked—

“My boxes are all ready, Lilian; are yours?”

“Yes, Aunt Winifred,” said Lilian, “they are all ready, but ——”

"Very well," said Miss Raymond ; " we start at ten to-morrow. I shall allow you to visit Arthur *once*, or *perhaps* twice. I have reconsidered the matter."

Lilian was not usually demonstrative towards her Aunt Winifred, knowing that she disliked much profession of affection, but she now threw her arms round her neck and burst into tears.

"You are not very strong just now, Lilian," said Miss Raymond, giving her a more affectionate kiss than was her wont ; "I think change of air will be beneficial to you. Go downstairs to your Aunt Evelyn, and do not tire yourself for your journey by studying this evening. You are a good girl, Lilian."

That was all. The next evening found Miss Raymond and her niece settled for a fortnight in pleasant apartments at the West End of London. Lilian had not paid many visits to the great city, and was much interested and delighted in all she saw, but she felt that if she could only have seen Arthur *first*, she would have enjoyed everything else much more. However, she tried to be as patient as she could, and thought it wiser not to mention her brother at present, but to submit willingly to whatever plans her aunt might make for her amusement.

One morning, two or three days after their arrival, Miss Raymond informed her that she was going out for an hour or two, but should be back in time to accompany her in a short walk before luncheon time. Lilian was not sorry to have a little quiet time to herself, for she was tired after the sight-seeing of the previous day, and glad of rest. Miss Winifred did not volunteer any information as to the nature of her errand, and Lilian did not ask where she was going, though she felt some curiosity, especially as she noticed her aunt's resolutely fixed lips and stern aspect when she left the house.

Arthur Thursfield, busily employed in Messrs. Wood-

ward and Co.'s Organ Works, was rather astonished when he was called to the office parlour to see a visitor—morning visits from his friends being a rare occurrence ; but he was still more astonished when he found the occupant of the parlour to be Miss Raymond.

"Aunt Winifred !" he exclaimed, as soon as he found breath. "How do you do ? I had no idea you were in London ! There is not anything the matter with Lilian ?" he added, anxiously.

"I am quite well, Arthur," answered Miss Winifred, coldly, "and your sister is also in good health, except that she has just now a little want of appetite, and a little paleness of complexion, which I do not call *illness*. I have brought her to London for a fortnight, to give her change and amusement, which is considered more indispensable for young people nowadays than it used to be."

"Is she not with you ?" asked Arthur, looking round the room eagerly, as if he expected Lilian to be concealed in some cupboard or corner, till her aunt thought it a fit time for her to make her appearance.

"She is not with me," returned Miss Winifred, calmly. "I wished first to visit you myself, and observe whether your self-chosen abode were a fit place for your mother's child to enter. What were you doing just now when you were called to see me ?"

"I was employed in my usual manner, in the works," answered Arthur, with a half smile, "superintending and aiding in the construction of an organ. A magnificent one it will be, Aunt Winifred ! You ought to come and see it."

"Come and see it !" echoed Miss Winifred, drawing her silk skirts about her more closely, and looking at her nephew as if she thought him demented. "You would have *me* come into your workshop, among your low-born associates, and show an interest in your bits of wood and metal, and your carpenter's tools and your pipes !"

"It is not exactly a 'workshop,' Aunt Winifred," said Arthur, "at least not such an one as you appear to imagine; and I assure you there is a great deal to be seen that is very interesting indeed—much more so than you have any idea of."

"My interests do not lie in the channels *you* have chosen," retorted Miss Raymond, haughtily. "Arthur, are you as infatuated as ever about your ridiculous scheme? Ridiculous, I say, and always have said from the very first. And this morning I have proved it."

"You have not been to see *him*?" exclaimed Arthur.

"I have," replied his aunt, scornfully. "I have just returned from a morning call, which has been edifying, I assure you, in the highest degree."

"What did he say to you?" asked Arthur, in an eager, troubled, even trembling voice. "Was he glad to see you? It was kind in you to visit him."

"Was it?" said Miss Winifred, with a laugh which grated on Arthur's ear. "He did not appear very grateful for my kindness, and our interview was none of the pleasantest, I can tell you. Men are all selfish, but of them all, he is the *most* selfish, the most idle, the most worthless."

"Hush, Aunt Winifred!" exclaimed Arthur, hoarsely. "You forget? Do not say these things to me. If they are true, surely it is not for us to say them; and I think they are not true—not quite true, Aunt Winifred!"

"They *are* true, Arthur," said his aunt, calmly. "You are deceiving yourself utterly, and you are deceiving your sister with hopes which will never be realised. Mark my words: I say, *never*!"

Arthur shuddered.

"I do not believe that," he answered, in a low voice. "I will not believe it. God helping me, they shall be realised."

"He is not worth your thought, Arthur," said Miss Raymond, impatiently. "He is utterly callous and thoughtless. You have disgraced yourself, your sister, your Aunt Evelyn, and myself for *nothing*—not even a grateful 'Thank you' for your pains."

Arthur sighed.

"I do not work for thanks," he said. "I trust they will come by-and-by, and if they do, they will reward me for my labour. When I am thanked for it, I shall feel that there is some hope."

"*When!*" repeated Miss Winifred, scornfully. "Then you may wait till doomsday, Arthur! Listen to me. For the last time I say to you, give up this mad freak, and do as I wish you, and I will forgive your past ingratitude."

"Aunt Winifred," said Arthur, in a weary tone, "I thought we had talked this matter over often enough. You know how fully my mind is made up upon the subject. It is useless for you to try to dissuade me from my purpose. Surely I have told you this distinctly enough! If you cannot and *will* not understand my reasons for what I do, and the feelings which I must have on this matter, cannot you let me alone? Have you come here for nothing but to give me these useless reproaches, and hurl at me the bitter facts which I know only too well? I know he is apparently callous at present, and destitute of any feeling of gratitude; but is that to put a stop to my work, and prevent my making any further efforts to save him?"

"If I have come here to reproach you, you deserve it," retorted Miss Winifred. "You are as ungrateful as he. Have I not lived a good many more years in the world than you? and may I not be supposed to know a *little* more of mankind than a beardless boy? You will find it out some day, Arthur, when your visions are broken and your savings squandered. You will not listen to my advice now, but you will come to me *then*, and expect me to give you

something more substantial than advice. But do not depend upon that. I will never support you in your folly."

Arthur made no reply. Tears stood in his eyes, but Miss Winifred was exceedingly angry, or surely they would have touched her. At last he asked when he should see Lilian.

"You do not deserve to see her at all," said his aunt, severely; "but I do not break my word, and I have given her permission to visit you. She is a good girl, and I am pleased to gratify her wishes. At what hour are you free?"

"I am always at my own lodgings by six o'clock," answered Arthur, "except when I have been engaged at any long distance. The evenings are long now, and I will see Lilian home safely."

"She shall spend to-morrow evening with you," said Miss Winifred, in icily-cold tones, each of which seemed to fall on her nephew's ears like a lump of lead. Poor fellow! He had felt so glad to see her there, waiting for him, and had hoped that her visit might have been for the purpose of making her peace with him. His heart was almost as sensitive in some ways as a woman's, and in the midst of his daily toil he often longed for a little home-love and sympathy.

"Will you not come and see me again, Aunt Winifred?" he asked, rather wistfully, as she rose to depart; for though her present visit had not been pleasant enough to bear repetition, he wished to be reconciled to her much more earnestly than she gave him credit for.

"Certainly not," she answered, haughtily; "I never intrude my presence where it is not wanted, and where no respect is paid to my words or my advice. I shall be at a *very* great loss to know what to do with my time, Arthur, when I find my way here again."

She turned away, and taking no notice of her nephew, as

he opened the door for her, walked down the street with her most dignified and scornful tread. Arthur looked after her, and gave a bitter laugh, which was half a sob, as he came back into the room and shut the door. Then his excited feelings gave way, and throwing himself into a chair by the table, he leaned his arms upon it, and burst into a passion of uncontrollable tears. It was no use to feel ashamed of them ; they would have their way, and he had no power to prevent them. It was so cruel of Miss Raymond to taunt him with his misery ! Was it not enough to know what he knew, without having the miserable knowledge thrown into his face ? It was torture to have the wretched facts, which he would not allow himself to *think* of, and which he kept jealously hidden from his own eyes as much as possible, spoken out loud in plain words, and dinned into his sensitive ears. They seemed to tingle still with the pain of them, and every nerve seemed to be quivering with the sharp touch of his aunt's tongue. He was so utterly weary of these painful discussions ; they could do no good, and Miss Raymond knew it—or surely ought to have known it well enough before now ! The thought of Lilian at length calmed his excited feelings. She was the one bright spot in his life—a life which at times seemed desolate and dreary enough. But with her on his side, he would not care what any one else might say of him ; and the thought of seeing her, and having her sympathy the next evening cheered him up at last, and made him lift his head from the table, and dash away his tears, half indignant with himself for having given way to them. As he went back to his work, avoiding notice as much as possible, a vision of a wistful, sympathetic pair of eyes, seen sometime since, came before him, with a sudden flash of memory. But he coloured slightly when he remembered whose they were, and wished they would not haunt him. Only sympathy was sweet—and he did not get

much of it. He could not help remembering how pleasant it had been to him, that October afternoon, when he had spoken of his sister Lilian, and those strange dark eyes had read his trouble, barely though he had touched upon it, and had answered him with that look of wistful sympathy, which had ever since at times haunted him.





CHAPTER XVII.

"Thou giv'st so long, Timon I fear me, thou
Wilt give thyself away in paper shortly."

—*Timon of Athens.*

IT was a joyful meeting on the following evening between Lilian and her brother, and for a time they laughed and chatted as merrily as if no grim-faced trouble lurked in the corners, and no hard-hearted Aunt Winifred existed two or three miles off. Lilian had brought with her a supply of little comforts and luxuries, which she knew Arthur could not indulge himself in, and she amused herself for some time in unpacking and displaying them, and stowing them away in cupboards. Then Arthur insisted that she should have some tea, and the landlady prepared it with extra care and goodwill, for the sake of the sweet fair face of her lodger's young lady visitor, whom she eyed with a good deal of curiosity and wonder. She had always confessed herself partial to her lodger, and had thought it a pity that "such a pleasant, good-looking young gentleman should live so *very* plain, and not even have the front parlour for his sitting-room!" And now that he was entertaining such a "well-dressed, sweet-spoken young lady," her curiosity became a good deal excited, and she took unnecessary pains in smoothing out the folds of the tablecloth, and arranging

the tea-service, in order that she might peep furtively at the visitor from time to time, and discover whether she were the young man's "sister, or sweetheart, or what." Her final conclusion was, that she was his sister, from the evident likeness she bore to him ; but she was obliged to return to her own apartments unsatisfied as to the reason why the young lady should apparently be in such very much better circumstances than her brother, whose weekly bills—well, Mrs. Featherwell could safely assure her conscience that she was right in saying, that she never had known a young gentleman live on so little !

"It is pleasant to have you to pour out my tea for me, Waterlily," said Arthur, surveying his sister, in her fresh white dress and green ribbons, with evident enjoyment.

"I wish I could pour it out for you always !" said Lilian, with a sigh. "I wish I could come and live with you, Arthur, and take care of you ! It seems so horribly selfish for me to live in that pretty house at Pointhaven, with all sorts of nice things about me, while you are toiling away here, and have——"

"No nice things at all ?" said Arthur, smiling, as Lilian's eye glanced round his diminutive apartment. "Don't you like my 'furnished lodgings,' Lily ?"

"You ought not to be in them," said Lilian, in a troubled voice. "This is a nice little room enough, but it isn't comfortable-looking, as I should like it to be. I don't believe you spend as much as you ought upon yourself ; you look thin and pale, and I am sure you save up much more than you can spare. Don't do it, Arthur ! I can't bear to see you denying yourself of *everything* ! He doesn't deserve *that*," she added, sadly.

"I'm all right, Lily," said Arthur, cheerfully ; "I can live very well without luxuries in my sitting-room. I haven't much time for noticing that my carpet is faded and my chairs hard and straight-backed. I don't sit

here very much, you know, and when I do, I am always busy."

"And when do you rest?" asked Lilian, thinking of the easy-chairs and couches in the drawing-room at the Tower, of which *she* often felt the benefit, and contrasting them with Arthur's horsehair, cushionless sofa, and severe-looking, upright chairs, which repudiated the very idea of rest.

Arthur laughed. "At night," he said; "or if I want rest in the daytime, I tramp over London in search of my organist friends. I've got plenty of friends, Lilian, so you are really pitying me more than you need."

"Nice friends?" asked Lilian, doubtfully. "Real friends, who don't look down on you, and patronise you, because you are an 'organ-mender,' as Aunt Winifred calls it?"

"Aunt Winnie doesn't think I'm far removed from a cobbler," said Arthur, laughing. "She wouldn't be much more indignant if I sat behind a counter and mended shoes instead of organs! Yes, I have some real friends, and a good many pleasant acquaintances. Don't you remember my old schoolfellow, Longford? He has just got the curacy of St. Mark's, two streets off—his first—and I see him pretty often. He's a good fellow, and we are very good friends. Then there's Rutherford; he's organist of Trinity, in Netherby Square. A splendid fellow he is—worthy of his organ—and that's high praise!"

"And are you great friends?" asked Lilian, with interest.

"He and Longford are the best fellows I know," answered Arthur; "I'm often with him; he is older than I am, several years, but we're capital friends. I spend some of my evenings with him. He has a very comfortable house," he added, smiling. "But seriously, Lilian, I don't feel that I can be too sparing. I do want to get this *done*

as soon as I can, and it must take me a long time at the best."

"You would give yourself away to get it done, I know, if that would do any good," said Lilian, affectionately. "Dear Arthur, I want it to be done as much as you do, only I *don't* want you to make yourself ill, and wear yourself out in doing it. Promise me you won't."

"I won't do that," said Arthur. "Don't trouble about me, dear. My work is good for me, and I like it, I do really. And don't imagine that you are selfish in staying where you are; it is much better for you in every way. This wouldn't be a pleasant part of London for you to be in, spending hours by yourself, as you would have to do if you lived with me. It wouldn't be right for you, independently of your being able to help me much more where you are. What you have brought me to-night from yourself and Aunt Evelyn is a great help. How good it is of her!"

"Aunt Winifred doesn't know she does it," said Lilian. "I don't know what she would say if she found it out. Was she kind to you yesterday, Arthur? I was so surprised when she told me where she had been, but she said hardly anything of her visit, either to you or him."

Arthur's brow clouded. "No, she was not kind," he said, in a low voice. "I have given up hoping that she ever will be kind about that; she is as angry with me as ever. Poor Aunt Winifred! I suppose it is a great trial to her to have me here, but what can I do?"

"Forget all she said to you," said Lilian, coming to his side, and putting her arm round his neck. "She says horrid things to me about you sometimes, but I try not to mind them. It is no use minding them. And when you do succeed at last, Arthur, I know she will love and respect you much more than if you had yielded to her wishes, and

never done anything for him. I always think of what our mother would have wished, and then I feel happy, for I know *she* would say it is right and noble of you to do as you are doing."

"I think so too," said Arthur, rather huskily. "Poor mother! I am glad she had not this to bear. What shall we do this evening, Lily? Would you like to go out, or shall we stay here and talk?"

Lilian flushed, and hesitated.

"Arthur," she said, in a low voice, "is it far to where *he* is? I should so like to go and see him! Perhaps it would do him good—just a little good—if I went. Should you mind?"

"Would you like to go, really?" asked Arthur, eagerly. "I did not like to suggest it, because I knew it would be painful for you, dear, but I should like him to see you. It must do him good—if anything can!" he added, vehemently.

"Then let us get ready and go at once," said Lilian; but she trembled as she spoke. "If I am back with Aunt Winifred by ten o'clock it will do. It is early yet. Let me try to do him a little good, if I can."

Arthur ran out to call a cab, while Lilian was getting ready.

"I hardly like taking you," he said, reluctantly, as he followed her into it. "Are you sure you don't mind—that you won't mind it too much afterwards? Am I right in taking you?"

"Yes," said Lilian, firmly, though her face was pale, and her teeth chattered a little, which was a strange thing for them to do on a warm June evening. "Yes, it is quite right for me to go, and I will not mind it. I *can* be brave, you know, Arthur."

"I know you can," he said, affectionately; "and surely with you he will show more feeling. How long is it since you last saw him?"

"Seven years," said Lilian, in a low voice. "Just think, Arthur! It seems so dreadful!"

She burst into tears, and Arthur scarcely knew what comfort to offer. He could only put his arm round her, and draw her head upon his shoulder, as he sat by her side. Words failed him; but they are not always the best comforters after all, and before they had gone very far Lilian was brave again, and feeling calmer for her outburst.

The landlady wondered where the cabman might be taking her young lodger and his pretty sister, and she wondered still more, when, about three hours later, another cabman brought them back again, and through her open parlour-door she saw them come into the hall, with pale, grave faces, and heard Arthur tell the cabman to wait a few minutes before taking them on to Primrose Terrace, Atherton Square. She would have been more surprised still had she seen the young brother and sister clinging together in the little parlour upstairs—clinging in a hopeless, forlorn sort of way, with that same pallor on their faces, and tears in their eyes, as though each were the only comfort left to the other in the world. But she did not see that, and she thought the young gentleman's voice sounded quite nice and cheerful, when he said to his sister, as they came downstairs again—

"We must make haste home now, Lily, or Aunt Winifred will think I have carried you off somewhere for good. It's such a lovely night; we would walk, if it wasn't so late."

"You will have a nice walk back," said Lilian. "I am glad of that."

And they got into the cab again, and were rolled away, and Mrs. Featherwell took up her knitting, which she had let fall in her endeavours to peep through her half-open door, without being seen herself, and began to move her needles again rapidly, saying to herself—

"Atherton Square! Why, that's one of the finest squares in London! A sight of gentlefolk there is in them parts, and I've heard say as the lodgings in Primrose Terrace is beautiful. I thought the young lady looked as if she belonged to quality-like sort of folk. So do her brother, for the matter of that, though he lives so plain, and works for his living, and *does* wear his clothes till they're shabby. But I always thought he were a real gentleman; his ways and that is so pleasant, and he don't think it beneath him to speak civil to those as does for him. There's something in his face, too, as always took my fancy. I wonder now why he don't live with the young lady in them grand parts, instead of working along here? They seemed wonderful fond of one another too! Well, she were a pretty young lady, for certain, and I hope she'll come and cheer him up a bit again. I'd like to tell her to make him eat more than he does; we're in a land of plenty, and he's like a sparrer for what he takes—leastways often—and it ain't good for him. I've a good mind to tell him so myself."

And on his return home, some time later, the good land-lady really felt quite distressed at his actually going off to bed without even the shadow of supper. She could not enjoy her own for thinking of it.

Miss Raymond asked no questions of her niece when she reached home, as to her manner of spending the evening with her brother, and looked so stern and uncompromising, as she sat in her easy-chair, occupied with her usual knitting-needles, that Lilian vouchsafed no explanation. She had almost resolved to tell her aunt where she had been, but Miss Raymond's face discouraged her. It said so plainly, "I have allowed you to have your way, but I wish to hear nothing. Your seeing your brother is a matter of perfect unconcern to me," that Lilian's mouth was shut. And she resolved finally *not* to tell either then or at any other time, if she could help it, lest her aunt's anger against

Arthur should be aroused afresh, by his having allowed her to make that evening visit with him. She knew that Miss Raymond would probably blame Arthur severely, and that an assurance that the visit had been entirely undertaken through her *own* wish and proposal would make no difference at all in her aunt's feelings. She feared that the subject might be mentioned next day, but Miss Winifred did not speak of her nephew till a week later, when she gave Lilian permission to visit him again. By dint of persuasion Lilian also obtained leave to spend her *last* evening in London with him, which she felt to be a great triumph. They had a great deal to talk over, that last time together. Mr. Everard and Hazel were topics of especial interest, and Lilian found a great deal more to tell about both of them than she had been able to tell in letters. The evening passed only too quickly, and the clock striking nine made them both start.

"I must go," said Lilian. "Aunt Winifred said I was not to be late to-night; but we will walk back, instead of taking a cab, and that will give us a little more time together. I wish I could stay here with you, Arthur, instead of going back to Pointhaven with Aunt Winifred!"

"You wouldn't say so long," said Arthur, smiling rather wistfully. "You would find it horribly dull in these poky little lodgings all day while I am at my work. It would never do, Lilian. Don't make me discontented by talking of it!"

"I shouldn't mind the dullness," said Lilian. "If I could be with you, I shouldn't mind anything. But money, money, Arthur! We must do anything to get money, and I know I can help you better by staying with Aunt Winifred and Aunt Evelyn."

"It is right for you to stay with them," said Arthur. "However much I should like to have you here with me, I should not really be happy, for it isn't a fit place for you.

You are not able to bear so much as I am, you poor, pale, Water-lily!"

"I can bear a great deal," said Lilian, stoutly. "I don't think *you* look fit to bear much just now, Arthur. You are overworked—I know you are. What have you been doing in the evenings lately?"

"A little extra work in the evenings doesn't hurt me," answered Arthur, evasively. "There's plenty on hand just now, and I've been making up accounts, and drawing plans for Mr. Woodward in the evenings. You see, Lily," he added, "I get a little more for it, and *that* is a consideration."

"I know," said Lilian, sadly; "but I am afraid you will work *too* hard, and break down. And I wish you would spend just a little more upon yourself! Don't deny yourself of *everything*, Arthur! I can't bear to think that I have so many comforts and pleasures at home, while you are giving yourself none at all."

"I *have* pleasures," said Arthur, "plenty of them. Don't look incredulous, Lily; it is quite true. While I have good use of my legs, to take me on organ-hunting expeditions, I shall always have pleasures. You have no idea what an amount of acquaintances I am making among the London organists!"

"When do you think you will get a holiday?" asked Lilian, as they sallied forth into the street arm in arm.

"I hardly know yet," said Arthur, "but I will let you know when it is settled. I shall run down to Pointhaven, of course, so expect me at the turret staircase some night, and don't let Aunt Winifred clear out the 'Jungle' on any account!"

"She won't do that," said Lilian; "it is too hopeless a task. Cook is always teasing about it, but it won't be done. So come when you can, Arthur: you will be quite safe, and

I shall be looking out for you. When shall we be able to meet without all these difficulties, I wonder?"

"Some day," said Arthur, cheerily. "Its a long lane that has no turning, you know."

"Ours is a very long lane," said Lilian, with a sigh, "and Aunt Winifred makes it longer! But at anyrate, the end is nearer than it was last year, and every year it will be nearer still. Only don't overwork, Arthur. If anything happened to you, I don't know what I should do."

A quarter of an hour brought them to Atherton Square, and the brother and sister parted on the doorstep of No. 4 Primrose Terrace with a rather forlorn attempt at cheerfulness. Next day Miss Winifred took her niece back to Pointhaven.





CHAPTER XVIII.

“O, like a book of sport thou’lt read me o’er ;
But there’s more in me than thou understand’st . . .
Why dost thou so oppress me with thine eye ?”

—*Troilus and Cressida.*

HAZEL worked diligently all the summer, and her blind master grew more interested in her every day. He spared no pains in teaching her, and the lesson-hours were insensibly beginning to increase in length, and were certainly becoming more and more interesting. Hazel began to write out her master’s music with much greater ease and freedom, and Mr. Everard kept her well supplied. His face was wonderfully brighter than it had been a year ago. A little sympathy and kindness go a long way sometimes, and the blind organist and the lighthouse maiden had mutually added much to each other’s happiness during the time of their acquaintance. Sometimes Lilian Thursfield happened to break in unwittingly upon their studies, and when she did so, she generally remained to hear the end of them, for she found them interesting. And she discovered a good deal more of Hazel’s character and talents during these lesson-hours than she could at any other time, and was astonished at the girl’s intelligence and quick understanding, and at the perseverance with which she worked. Queer

lessons they were too. Always music for a while, and when that was done, sometimes one subject and sometimes another, according to the fancy of the master or his pupil. Generally Hazel brought some new treasure out of the sea, or had some new puzzling question to ask, which would form the subject of the afternoon's conversation—questions upon all sorts of arts, and sciences, and studies, and Mr. Everard seemed generally able to satisfy her curiosity ; or if not, he could tell her what books she must read to satisfy it, and then Hazel would call at the second-hand bookstall in Fish Street, on her way home, and spend an hour there, turning over musty volumes, in the hope of finding what she wanted. All her spare pennies found their way to that bookstall, and by degrees she was getting quite a select little library of her own—of old-fashioned books, perhaps, but then, when she had so much to learn, they must be better than nothing ; and if they did not give the *newest* answers to Hazel's favourite questions, "Why?" and "How?" they gave reasons of *some* sort, and Mr. Everard always knew whether they were good answers or not.

Meanwhile Hazel did not neglect her home duties, distasteful though many of them might be. She was a good girl, and her parents could not complain of her. They vexed themselves over her book-loving, music-loving proclivities, but they had not the heart to scold her for them, when they saw the wistful look in her dark eyes, and the tears which rose to them, if they hinted that "learnin' was no good for the likes of she." But Jack scolded on every possible occasion, so that Hazel began to dread, and even to dislike, his visits. The sight of her books or music-papers about the room had always a very bad effect upon his temper, and he was unreasonably angry because she would not give them up to please him. "You care a sight more for your books than for me, Hazel," he said to her, reproachfully, one day, and Hazel could not deny the charge. She

feared it was true. She had always been fond of Jack, but she certainly felt now that she could better dispense with him than with her beloved books and music. Of course she did not tell him so; she would not have so wounded his feelings, but her hesitating answer, that she cared for *both*, failed by a long way to satisfy Jack, and from that day his gloom increased.

There was one thing he could not deny, and which other people noticed besides himself, and that was, that those books and those lessons with Mr. Everard had a wonderful power of drawing out the beauty of Hazel's face. Whether it was that she was happier, or whatever it was, she certainly seemed to grow more beautiful every day. That refined, spiritual look on her face, which made her so unlike her people, shone out more clearly every day, and the light in her dark hazel eyes grew deeper and fuller, till, as Jack expressed it, "you felt when you looked down into them, as if you were looking down into two clear, pure lakes, so deep that you couldn't see the bottom of them." Hazel grew tired of Mr. Jack's grumbling at last, and one September afternoon, happening to look up from her studies, and to see him approaching the lighthouse, she popped all her books and papers into a cupboard, and took up instead an old sock, which she began to darn industriously. The result was that Jack looked more good-humoured when he came in than he had done for some weeks.

"That's how I like to see thee, lass," he said, gazing admiringly on the pretty head bowed over the work. "None of your larnin' for me. Tired of your books at last, ain't you?"

Jack's tone was imploring, but Hazel could not tell a fib to save anybody's feelings, and answered—

"No, Jack, I'm not tired of them. Don't let us talk of my books, as you hate them so. Why should we?"

"I don't know," said Jack, grimly. "If I didn't see them any more, maybe I shouldn't talk of them."

"You don't see them now," said Hazel, with a smile, "and you are not going to see them to-night; I've got father's socks to darn. Tell me about the *Firefly*, and how many passengers you've had to-day."

"Well, there was a sailor for one," said Jack, "who came over from Waterton to Marston's Ferry, as I had a bit of a talk with. He pricked up his ears when I said my name were Manlinson; and when I told him my uncle Manlinson were here at the lighthouse, he said, was his wife called Bell? I told him as she were, and he said he'd seen her, whiles ago, down in Sussex, and he thought he'd come over some day and see the family. Not a bad sort he were. His name's Tom Shipwell. Ever heard on him?"

"No," said Hazel. "I daresay he is some old friend of father's and mother's. Mother doesn't talk much about the friends she had in Sussex, and father wasn't much at home then, so perhaps he doesn't know Tom Shipwell. Has he come from Sussex?"

"No, from the Injies," answered Jack. "He told me how he had been round the world four times, and been shipwrecked more often than you'd like to be, Hazel; and not long ago he were left with two shipmates on one of them man-eating islands—you know all about 'em, I s'pose—and they was nearly being served up for a meal—they was indeed!"

"I don't like those stories," said Hazel, with a shiver. "Poor man! Do you know, Jack, I always feel queer when people talk of shipwrecks."

"Queer! Why, lass, what's that for?" asked Jack, taking Hazel's little hand in his big palm, and stroking it reassuringly.

"I don't know," said Hazel, and a dreamy, troubled look came into her eyes; "I can't tell you why, and I don't"

know *how* I feel exactly. It's as if—as if—I could remember something that I *can't* remember, and when I try to remember it, it slips away and mocks me. It frightens me, Jack. Don't tell me any more about shipwrecks!"

"You're a queer one," said Jack, looking at her wonderingly. "Why should you be frightened? I do believe, Hazel, it's all along o' them books you get such queer fancies."

"No, it isn't," said Hazel. "I can't help it. I've felt ever so much happier since Mr. Everard began to teach me."

"You only gets further from me nor ever," said Jack, disconsolately. "And I love you, Hazel! I know I ain't fit to stand up along wi' you—a fellow like me, and you 'most like an angel—but I'd take care of ye, that I would, Hazel!"

Hazel was looking at him with a puzzled face, not quite sure what he meant, and was wondering what answer to make, when the door opened, and she was rescued from her difficulty by the entrance of her mother, who had just returned from the fish market.

"Make the tea, there's a good lass," said Mrs. Manlinson, when she had exchanged greetings with her nephew. "It's been a good day for the fish, Hazel."

"Has it, mother? I'm glad," said Hazel, wondering if this day's good fortune might add a silver sixpence to her little store of book-money. She was not disappointed, for while she was helping her mother to clear away the tea-things after tea, her father produced a bright new shilling from his coat pocket, and gave it to her, saying—

"Here, lass, ye haven't had a bit of pocket-money this some while. Put it by for a rainy day."

Hazel's "rainy day" was always the bookstall, and she dropped the shining coin into her money-box joyfully. Just as she ran downstairs again somebody knocked at the

door, and Jack ushered in a tall, bearded man, in sailor costume, with a kindly, weather-beaten face, and bright, good-humoured grey eyes, which, as they glanced at Hazel, seemed to pierce her through and through. Mrs. Manlinson started violently as he entered, and exclaimed—

“Tom Shipwell, is it you? Where on earth do you spring from, man?”

“My ship’s just in from Calcutta,” answered the stranger, “and coming across from Waterton to Marston’s Ferry this afternoon to see a niece of mine, I fell in with this young chap, who said his name was Manlinson. So as I remembered Bell Manlinson as was kind to me along in Sussex some years ago, and heard she was here at the lighthouse, I thought I’d come and see her. Taken ye by surprise, haven’t I? But there’s no knowing where a sailor will turn up, you know.”

“I’m glad to see you, Shipwell,” said Mrs. Manlinson. “Jim,” and she turned to her husband, who was looking on in some bewilderment, “this is the sailor that was wrecked at Stonybeach whiles ago, when you was out at sea. He were the only man saved—don’t ye mind my telling you all about it, and how Widow Mike and I nursed him through, after they brought him in, half drowned, to our house?”

“Ay, I mind it all,” said Manlinson. “I’m glad to see ye, mate. Sit down a bit and let’s hear what seas you’ve been tossin’ over since you went off again from Stonybeach. I mind Bell writin’ and tellin’ me all about that shipwreck, and how there was but one man saved. I’m glad she did ye a kindness; she were always a good-hearted woman, my wife were.”

Manlinson’s honest face beamed with content, but his wife looked restless and uneasy, and watched the stranger half fearfully. *His* eyes were fixed upon Hazel, following her, as she moved about the room, tidying it up for the

evening; he seemed as if he could not take them from her.

"Is that the child?" he said at last, in a low voice, to Mrs. Manlinson. "She's grown a fine girl, to be sure. And ye've never heard——"

"Ay, that's our daughter, Hazel," said the lighthouse-keeper, proudly, catching part of Shipwell's words. "Come here, Hazel, child, and show yourself."

As Hazel moved towards the fire a glance passed between Tom Shipwell and Mrs. Manlinson. He looked slightly puzzled, and her eyes had a warning look in them; she shook her head with a slight frown, and the sailor gave a little nod in return, as if to say, "I understand."

"You don't remember me, I suppose?" he said, in a cheery voice, taking Hazel's hand, which she timidly held out to him, and shaking it heartily.

"No," she answered. "Have I seen you before?"

"I've seen you at any rate," he said. "Maybe you were too small to see me! I've tossed you up on my shoulder many a time—a pretty little thing you were, and no mistake. And you never minded Tom Shipwell? You used to cry for me to take you; I mind that very well. And so you've lived here in the lighthouse all your life?"

"All my life that I can remember," said Hazel. "I don't remember Stonybeach, and so I don't remember you—at least I can't remember anything very clearly except this lighthouse. Sometimes I *think* I can remember something else, but I don't know what it is."

Again the sailor glanced at Mrs. Manlinson, who said hurriedly—

"Why, Shipwell, what would you have her remember? She was but a baby, not three years old, when I came down to meet Manlinson, and we came to the lighthouse."

"She's a strange child," said Manlinson, making room

for his daughter at his side ; "she always were a strange child. You wouldn't think now that she could belong to a rough old couple like we, would you ?"

"No, I shouldn't, by the looks of her," said the sailor, candidly ; "she ain't much like you, but she looks a good girl, and if she's prettier and fairer than most, it ain't her fault."

Hazel blushed, and her father smiled proudly.

"She's a good girl, sure enough," he said, "with all her fancies ; an' if she's grown up a flower among weeds, as one might say, she's none the worse for it, and we likes to look at her. Seems to me, sometimes, as if she'd be happier, perhaps, for being more like her own folks ; but there, if she can't be, she can't, and she ain't made like we, that's certain."

"I suppose that's it," said the sailor, and he stroked his brown beard thoughtfully, as his keen eyes again pierced Hazel through and through. She wished he would not look at her so, and as soon as she could get away she went out on the rocks, where Jack followed her. She would rather have been alone, but Jack said he had only a few minutes to stay, so she did not like to tell him so. And, to her great relief, he did not allude again to the subject which his aunt's return had so unceremoniously interrupted.

Meanwhile Manlinson, after refreshing himself with a long chat with Shipwell about the foreign lands which each had visited, and the dangers and adventures which each had experienced, went out to see that his boat was in readiness for a fishing expedition next day, leaving his wife to entertain the stranger till his return. Looking round, to see that the lighthouse-keeper had closed the door behind him, Tom Shipwell said to Mrs. Manlinson, in a low voice—"Doesn't he know ?"

She shook her head. "What were the use of telling him ?" she said. "He always said it would break his

heart—and it happened so convenient like—I didn't see no call to tell anything about it."

The sailor looked dubious. "I think I'd have told him," he said. "I've got no wife of my own, but I've heard say there shouldn't be secrets between man and wife. What would you do supposing somebody turned up? Haven't you ever heard *anything*?"

"Nothing," answered Mrs. Manlinson. "What should I do if I did? Why, Shipwell, I don't know as I'm likely to, *now*; I don't want to think about it. My poor man! Don't talk of it, Shipwell!"

"Well, for your sakes, of course," said the sailor. "Twould be worse for him now, wouldn't it? He do seem set upon her, sure enough, and so anybody might be; I mean anybody *else*, you know. Is she——"

Here the sailor dropped his voice, and he and Mrs. Manlinson talked in whispers by the fire until the lighthouse-keeper returned. And as, when people talk in whispers, it is generally understood that they do not wish others to hear, it would be dishonourable to repeat their conversation. As her husband's footsteps were heard outside, Mrs. Manlinson said—"You'll be sure not to say a word, or give a hint, Shipwell?" and Shipwell answered—"Of course not, you may trust me," and then he rose from his seat, and said he must be off. However, Manlinson persuaded him and Jack to stay to supper, and again the strange sailor's eyes tormented Hazel. She liked his face and his cheery voice, but she wished he would not look at her so; she could not think why he should do it.

"So you like the lighthouse, child?" he said, as he bade her good night. "You'd like always to live here, eh?"

"I'm not quite sure," Hazel answered, hesitatingly. "I love the lighthouse, and the sea, and the rocks, but——"

That "but" sounded as if it might mean worlds, yet

Hazel hardly knew what it meant herself. It only expressed that yearning after *something* which came upon her at times, and which, for some reason or other, was very strong to-night. Tom Shipwell shook hands with her heartily, almost crushing her poor little fingers in his strong clasp, and went off with Jack, whistling a song as he went. What was he whistling? It sounded like the echo of something Hazel had heard long, long ago. When could she have heard it, and where? Why, of course, Tom Shipwell must himself have whistled it in those old days, when, as he said, he had carried her on his shoulder and played with her at Stonybeach. She had never heard it since; indeed, she was not *sure* if she remembered it at all, or if it was not only fancy. She fancied so many things! She could even fancy that Tom Shipwell was connected with that other remembrance—which was *not* a remembrance—about shipwrecks. She had heard her mother telling her father that the sailor had been wrecked at Stonybeach. Perhaps she had seen that shipwreck, and *that* was the remembrance which haunted her—of course a very shadowy one, as she was only two years old at the time. How funny that her mother had never spoken of Tom Shipwell before! She had never spoken of that shipwreck either, and what a terrible one it must have been—only one man being saved from it! But as Hazel thought about it, and said to herself that she would ask her mother that very night to tell her all about it, a feeling of terror came over her—that same strange feeling which she had confessed to Jack in the afternoon. What was it? What had she to do with that, or with any other shipwreck, that could make the very word mock and frighten her? She ran indoors, and took up her much-loved book about the stars, and in reading that the fright went away. She heard her father and mother chatting over the strangeness of events which had brought Shipwell to Pointhaven, till at last her

mother declared that she was "tired to death, and didn't want to say another word about Shipwell or anybody else," and bade Hazel put away her books and go to bed. Hazel obeyed; she thought her mother did certainly look very tired—but it had been market day, and that must be enough to tire anybody she thought.





CHAPTER XIX.

"She bore a mind that envy could not but call fair."

—*Twelfth Night.*

"**L**ILIAN," said Katie Stuart, meeting her friend on the beach one fine afternoon early in October, "the new vicar of All Saints' arrived the day before yesterday. Have you seen him? Papa called on him this morning, and he says his house is filled with books from end to end. He was senior wrangler one year, and he is dreadfully clever, papa says, but very shy, so *I* shan't like him. He was unpacking boxes of books when papa called, and they had to sit upon them while they talked."

"Well, he has had no time to settle in yet," said Lilian. "What is his name?"

"Auriol," answered Katie. "Pretty, isn't it? He isn't married, for he was a Fellow, you know; but he is young still, and papa likes him. I'm sure I shan't. I hate people who can think of nothing but books; but at any rate a new arrival is exciting, for we have been going on in such a humdrum fashion all this year. Even in the 'season' nobody at all interesting was to be seen."

"Perhaps people are getting tired of Pointhaven," said Lilian. "I don't like the 'season'; I like the place now, when one can walk on the beach in peace and enjoy oneself."

"You have such quiet tastes," said Katie, with a pout, "just like Constance. But it must be a good thing for you, or you wouldn't know what to do with yourself in that lonely old Tower. What do you do all day?"

"Ever so many things," said Lilian, with a smile. "I like the old Tower very much, and I always find plenty to do. Aunt Winifred likes me to read to her a good deal while she knits, and then I have my own studies, and I don't think I am often dull."

"Isn't Miss Raymond very strict," asked Katie, confidentially. "I don't mean to be rude, but she looks so stiff and proper always, I feel afraid of her."

"She is very strict about some things," answered Lilian, with a half sigh, "but she is very kind to me. She will do *almost* anything I ask her. I used to be very much afraid of her when I was small, but I understand her better now."

"You must quarrel sometimes, I'm sure," said Katie.

"Yes, we do," said Lilian, "but we make it up again. Aunt Evelyn is very different; I can't help loving her the best."

"Isn't your house haunted?" asked Katie, "or haven't you a family secret or something? You ought to have, you know. All old houses, with turrets, and queer passages, and cupboards, have ghosts or mysteries connected with them."

"Not always," said Lilian, quietly; "and I dare say many families have secrets, Katie, if you only knew it. I don't think we are *bound* to have a secret because we live in the Tower, are we?"

"Yes, you are," said Katie, decidedly. "Besides, you are blushing, so I know you have one. Never mind, I won't ask what it is, though I confess I am very curious. Take care, Lilian! We had better get out of the way of this gentleman, or he will run over us."

For advancing slowly towards them, in a straight line, was a tall gentleman, his eyes so intently fixed upon a volume in his hand that he was apparently oblivious of everything around him. Another volume was under his arm, on seeing which, Katie whispered, as she drew Lilian aside—"Mr. Auriol, Lilian, I am sure!"

One does not see a senior wrangler every day, and as the reader did not move his eyes from his book as he passed, the two girls investigated him thoroughly. Tall and slim, with fair hair, a pale, intellectual face, and broad forehead; the eyes were so bent upon the book that it was impossible to see what they were like.

"Very plain," was Katie's comment, when he had passed.

"I think he has a very interesting face," said Lilian, who could not speak evil of a senior wrangler. "I like it very much. It isn't handsome, but it is clever and refined, and kind too. I believe he is nice."

"Well, papa says so," said Katie; "but I don't care for people who are for ever poring over books. Here's another of them—oh, it is that lighthouse girl! She had much better be at home helping her mother to wash dishes."

"Perhaps there are none to wash just now," said Lilian. "I didn't think you were so prosy, Katie."

"Well, everybody says Hazel Manlinson is ruining herself," said Katie, "and that Mr. Everard was very foolish ever to think of educating her."

"Everybody doesn't know Hazel Manlinson," answered Lilian. "Mr. Everard does, and I do—a little—and I think he is quite right. People say it is strange that Hazel should be as she is; I think it is strange, too, but *as* she is so, and nobody can alter it, I think the best thing is to let her be happy."

"And you don't really think she would be happy always washing dishes?" said Katie, laughing.

"No, I don't," said Lilian, decidedly, "not any more than you or I would. Hush! she will hear us."

Hazel rose from her seat under the cliffs as the two girls approached, and smiled brightly as she returned Lilian's greeting. Katie could not help being struck with the grace of her movements and the beauty of her face—its bright, changing colour, and dark, earnest, wistful eyes.

"Studying, as usual, Hazel?" said Lilian. "Are you going to Mr. Everard's to-day?"

"No, Miss Lilian," answered the girl; and Katie, who had never heard her voice before, wondered at its sweetness and perfect intonation. "I am going to-morrow. I am not studying now; I am only reading."

"What?" asked Lilian. "Ah, your favourite, Long-fellow! Oh, what are those?" she added, catching sight of some exquisite sea-weeds lying in a basket of moss at Hazel's feet.

"They are for you, Miss Lilian," said Hazel, shyly. "Will you have them? I gathered them for you this morning, and I thought perhaps you would walk this way, and I could give them to you. Will you mind carrying them?"

"No, indeed!" said Lilian. "They are beautiful! Were you afraid to bring them to me at home, Hazel?"

Hazel blushed. "Not afraid exactly, Miss Lilian," she answered, "but I did not want to see——"

"Whom?" asked Lilian, with a smile, as Hazel hesitated.

"I was going to say *Miss Raymond*," said Hazel, in a low voice. "She saw me last time I went, and she does not like me."

"Was not she kind to you?" asked Lilian. "I am very sorry, Hazel. What did my aunt say to you?"

"She said it was foolish and forward of me to wish to be like my betters," said Hazel, her cheeks glowing and her

lips quivering. "And she said that Mr. Everard, who is so kind to me, was ridiculous, like—like 'all the rest of them.' And I was angry, and then she called me proud, and said I was spoiled, and would never be good for anything." She drew herself up proudly, as she continued—"I will not go where people say those things to me, Miss Lilian! I don't mind for myself—though it is not true what she said—but Mr. Everard is kind, and very, very good to me, and I *will* be angry if people call him ridiculous!"

"You must not think about what my aunt said," answered Lilian, gently. "She does not mean quite all she says, and she does not know you herself, Hazel, and so she does not quite understand. And about Mr. Everard—my aunt is not very fond of any sort of *man*, Hazel, but she does really like him better than many others. Don't be afraid of her; you must come and see me again, and you shall not see her any more till I have persuaded her to be kind to you."

"I don't want you to persuade her to be kind, please, Miss Lilian," said Hazel, still proudly. "I don't want anybody to be kind if they don't mean it. I love you, Miss Lilian, but people don't like me, you know—not many people."

"I do, at any rate," said Lilian, "and I am very much obliged to you for these beautiful sea-weeds. Don't be afraid to come to the Tower. My aunt does not mean to be unkind."

And with a pleasant nod and smile, which filled Hazel's heart with sunshine for the rest of the day, Lilian moved away with Katie.

"She is sweet—like a snowdrop," said Hazel to herself, as she watched Lilian's retreating figure. "And she is like the gentleman who played the organ so beautifully in St. Mary's Church, and who was so kind to me. I thought she was like him the first time I saw her. I wonder——"

Hazel went into a reverie, and "Evangeline" was forgotten. She was still busy thinking of Lilian and of that blissful hour of music in St. Mary's, when in the distance she descried a tall, erect figure, which she recognised as that of Miss Raymond. Not wishing again to encounter the enemy, Hazel sprang from her rocky seat, and darted across the beach down to the water's edge, like a startled hare. Here she got into her boat, and rowed herself off across the bay at full speed. She found the strange sailor, Tom Shipwell, at the lighthouse; he was going off in a day or two for another long voyage, and had come to say good-bye. Hazel had seen him once again since that first visit of his, and she liked him. He was kind to her, and spoke to her gently, and not in the rude, rough fashion to which she was accustomed from the neighbours. There was a sort of respect in his manner, which, though it amused Hazel, was pleasant to her. She much disliked the familiarity of her mother's friends in general, and shrunk from it almost as much as if she had really been the "Duchess" which she was called. And though she had seen so little of the sailor, she felt sorry that he was going away again so far. He seemed a sort of link between her and—*what?* She did not know, but there was an undefinable *something* in Tom Shipwell which attracted her, and there was a kind of fascination in that song that he was always whistling. He had told her that it was a lullaby song, which he used to sing or whistle to her at Stonybeach; but to Hazel's mind it was connected in some way with the rocking motion, not of a cradle, but of a vessel, and with the plashing sound of waves. She had told Tom Shipwell so, and he had replied, in his broad, cheery tones—

"Eh! but your mother says you're a strange lassie, as full of fancies as an egg is full of meat. Most likely 'tis only fancy that you can mind the song at all, for you were a wee bit of a thing when you heard it."

"I *don't* remember it exactly," Hazel said; "at least I don't know if I do. I seem to, but when I think about it my head gets into a whirl, and I can't remember anything."

And then a compassionate look had come into the sailor's keen grey eyes, and he had said—"Poor bairn! Why can't ye live without thinking?"

An easy question to ask, Hazel had thought, but when your head is full of thoughts, how can you help thinking? *She* couldn't.

"Here she is, Shipwell," said Mrs. Manlinson, as her daughter came springing up the rocks, with as fleet a step as a young chamois, and ran indoors with a bright roseleaf colour in her cheeks. The sailor took her hand and shook it heartily.

"We none of us know what we may want some day," he said, "and if ever you want Tom Shipwell, lassie, he'll be ready to serve you. Will you remember that?"

"What's she likely to want with you, mate?" asked her father, good-humouredly.

Tom Shipwell shrugged his shoulders. "Can't say at present," he answered, laconically; "but who knows? Anyhow, if I'm wanted, the *Britannia's* my ship, and she's bound for Shanghai, and she'll be there some while, I shouldn't wonder, so you can just write."

"Think a letter would find you?" asked Manlinson, doubtfully. "But there, what are we likely to want ye for? I don't see as it's at all likely myself. Come and see us again next time you're back in the old country, but I'm not much of a letter-writer."

"Can't say as I am neither," said Shipwell, with a laugh; "but there's many onlikely things as happen in this world, and I didn't know as I mightn't be wanted to set 'em straight. Anyhow, there's Bessy Shipwell, my niece, at Marston's Ferry, she'll always know where to write to me, so you can ask her."

"What *do* you think we're goin' to want you for?" asked Mrs. Manlinson, impatiently. "Come, I must go in to my ironin', and there's Manlinson with all them lamps to trim; but let alone men for talkin'! Good-bye, and good luck to ye, Shipwell."

A minute more and the sailor was rowing himself off to Marston's Ferry. Hazel thought her mother seemed relieved when he had gone.

"He took an uncommon interest in our Hazel, mother, Shipwell did," observed Manlinson, pausing on the stairs, with the oil-can in his hand. "Seemed like he couldn't take his eyes off her, and he says to me half-a-dozen times over—'A beautiful girl that is of yourn, Manlinson.'"

"So she is," said his wife, ironing vigorously, "of course nobody can help seeing that. Besides 'tis natural he should take an interest in the bairn; he was main fond of her at Stonybeach. You won't see to get them lamps done, Jim, if you don't make haste."

The lighthouse-keeper went up the narrow stairs to his work, and Hazel came in and helped her mother to iron the clothes. She heard her sigh once or twice, and wondered what was the matter. But after tea Mrs. Manlinson brightened up, and became more cheerful than she had been since the day of Shipwell's first visit, and Hazel could not help thinking that her mother had some reason for feeling glad of his departure.





CHAPTER XX.

"The tyranny of the open night's too rough
For nature to endure."

—*King Lear.*



OCTOBER went out in a blustering fashion. The wind and the waves had evidently made a conspiracy to enjoy themselves for once, after their own mood, and to deafen everybody in Point-haven, for they roared in concert from morning till night, and then till morning again. The wind tore the leaves from the trees, and whirled them high in the air, and drove them in great piles into the tidiest, most neatly-kept corners of well-trimmed gardens; it threw sand into the eyes of anybody who was bold enough to walk upon the beach, and then whistled in its victims' ears in derision; it blew chimney-pots into the streets, and hats into the sea, and did all the mischief it could, while the waves dashed themselves frantically against the rocks at Perilpoint, and rolled back again, foaming with rage, because they could get no further. Most people, who were not obliged of necessity to go out, stayed at home while the rough weather lasted, but Hazel, with a straw hat firmly fixed upon her head, by means of a scarf tied over it and under her chin, climbed over the rocks from morning to night, glorying in the sea music, and the rough wind, which sometimes threatened to

lift her off her feet and carry her away. But it never did ; it only sent her home with tangled locks, and flushed cheeks, and bright shining eyes. And one day it did something more ; it brought her a little adventure. For, as the weather had calmed a little one afternoon, she had ventured to the town to copy music for Mr. Everard, and both master and pupil became so engrossed in their work that they did not notice the gathering clouds and rising wind, till a sudden tremendous gust shook the room, and roused them with a start.

"You must not venture out yet, my child," said Mr. Everard ; "it would not be safe, but as soon as this storm is over you had better take the opportunity of getting home as fast as possible. Did you come by the water?"

"No," said Hazel, "mother doesn't let me come that way, now the sea is rough ; I came by the cliff and fir-wood. I wish you could see the waves, sir ! They are so beautiful !"

"Are they?" said Mr. Everard. "I remember when I used to enjoy looking at a stormy sea as much as you do. My little daughter and I together used to wander out and brave the winds and storms. Now I can only sit at home and listen to them."

"I don't think I could bear it," said Hazel, sorrowfully. "Was it not very dreadful—just at first?"

"You mean my blindness?" said the organist. "Yes, my child, and for a long time it seemed so ; but we can bear more than we think we can, and I had to bear what was worse than losing my sight—at least it seemed so. But a higher strength than our own enables us to endure many things from which we naturally shrink, Hazel."

"But what could be worse than being blind?" asked Hazel.

"Losing friends," answered Mr. Everard, slowly ; "friends whom I had trusted, and who deserted me when I became poor, and blind, and ill, Those are never real friends ; but

when one has loved and trusted them in the summer of one's life, it is hard to be left to bear the winter alone—to see them drop off one by one, and to find out that the pleasant friendship was only a hollow thing after all. That is often the way in this world, but it is a trial which I hope you may never have to bear."

"I would not care for such friends!" cried Hazel, indignantly. "They would not be worth caring about."

"But you would be grieved," said Mr. Everard, with a half smile. "I do not care now, but it was a long time before I became so philosophical. There *are* true friends—many of them—who remain true through thick and thin, but, I fear, a great many also whose truth is only in appearance. Ah, we don't all share alike, my child! but I had my bright days when I was young, so I must not complain now. Besides, have I not had two young friends given to me lately, and have I not always my music? We have always something good left to us."

"Yes," said Hazel, "music is good. I think I could do without friends if I had an organ like that one at St. Mary's, and if I could play it as you can—or Mr. Miller."

"Mr. Miller is a musician," said the blind man. "He was a kind young fellow, and a clever one. I should much like to see him again. Ah, I forget that I cannot see him—I mean, that I should like another talk with him. The wind has gone down a little, my child. Had you not better get home before another squall comes on? We will finish the music another time."

Hazel ran downstairs, and into the street. The wind was still very high, but she hardly felt it, she was so busy thinking how kind it was of Mr. Everard to call her one of his "friends," and in wondering how it was that he had become so poor. But she found herself breathless by the time she had reached the top of the hilly road leading from the town to the summit of the cliff, and paused a moment to recover

herself. The fir-wood was not far off, and how the trees swayed and creaked in the wind ! Supposing one of them were to fall while she was walking through the wood ! She fancied that she saw some one near the edge of the plantation, where the trees hung over the cliff ; it was a man's figure, and he was walking in her direction. She was wondering who had chosen to walk along the cliff on such a stormy day, when most people were indoors, when suddenly a great gust came, nearly carrying her off the ground, and in the midst of it she saw a large branch snapped off one of the fir-trees and flung towards the cliff's edge. She rushed forward, for, as it fell, she fancied she heard a groan, and she saw that the walking figure had disappeared. A few minutes brought her to the other side of the plantation, and she felt sick and faint when she saw some one lying motionless across the path, just where it began to slope down to the rocks, with the great fir-branch close beside him, one end of it lying across his left arm and side. Her first impulse was to drag away the branch ; it was very heavy and hard to move, but she succeeded with an effort, and then stooping over the prostrate figure, she recognised in the pale delicate features and fair waving hair, Mr. Miller, the young musician. His eyes were closed, and he was quite unconscious, and as Hazel gently touched his arm, she found that it hung limp and helpless. She shuddered and turned faint for an instant ; then recovering herself, she sprang down the steep pathway, and scrambled down the side of the rocks till she found a pool of clear water, washed up by the waves. With this she filled her hat—the only thing she had about her that would hold water—and clambering up the rocks again swiftly, dashed some of it upon the wounded man's face. The shock brought him to his senses, but he moaned with pain, as he half lifted himself from the ground.

“ Lie down,” said Hazel ; “ you are hurt, and I am going

to bring somebody to help you ; I shall only be gone a few minutes. You will not try to move till I come back ? ”

Arthur Thursfield looked at her intently, but he had become half unconscious again, and did not recognise her.

“ My arm,” he said faintly, “ it is broken—and my side. The tree fell and knocked me down ; I am afraid I cannot move.”

He lost all consciousness again, and Hazel darted down the rocks at full speed to the lighthouse. Her father was at home, fortunately, and he and his wife started off at once to the stranger's assistance. Hazel meanwhile prepared a tiny spare room for his reception, and had just made everything ready when they brought him in. The pain of being moved and carried down the rough pathway had brought him to himself, and his brow was contracted with suffering. But he smiled, and thanked them, as they laid him upon the bed, and asked if it was the lighthouse to which they had brought him.

“ Yes, it's the lighthouse,” said Mrs. Manlinson ; “ but you ain't fit to talk, sir. You just lie still, and we'll soon have you comfortable. My husband will bring the doctor in no time. Hazel, you go and sit down, child ; you're nigh as white as the gentleman himself.”

Hazel obeyed. It seemed a long time before the doctor came back with her father, but at last she saw them both hastening down the rocky path, and ran to tell her mother they were coming.

“ I'm glad of it,” said Mrs. Manlinson, coming to the door of Arthur's room, and speaking in a whisper, “ send him up quick ; the poor young gentleman's arm pains him awful, and his side too ; I don't know as there ain't a rib broken. You just keep downstairs, Hazel ; you can't do no good up here.”

Hazel shut herself up in the front parlour, while the

broken arm was being set, for now that her courage was not needed, it deserted her altogether, and she felt afraid of hearing any sound from upstairs. It was soon over, and she crept out as soon as she heard the doctor's step on the stairs, anxious to know exactly what was the matter.

"He'll do well enough now," the doctor said to her father, as he followed him down. "That's a nasty blow on the side, but it's a good thing there are no bones broken there. The arm is badly broken, but it will get right in time, if you attend well to directions. I shall look in again to-morrow. Your wife is a good nurse, isn't she? This is an awkward place out here, but you had much better keep him here now till he gets round again. Hasn't he any friends in the neighbourhood?"

"Not that I know of, sir," answered Manlinson. "He's the young gentleman as was down here last year seeing after the organs and such like; his name is Miller, but I don't know nothing about him. Hazel! here, child! Do you know if Mr. Miller has friends hereabouts?"

"No, father," answered Hazel, emerging from the parlour, where she had remained half hidden behind the door. "I heard him say once that he had a sister not very far off, but I don't know where."

"Ah, well, you'll find out in a day or two," said Dr. Lane. "Let him be as quiet as possible to-day. Is this your daughter? What is your name, child?"

"Hazel," she answered, shyly, for the doctor's eyes were scanning her in a fashion that was embarrassing.

"What?" he said. "Where on earth did you get a name like that?"

"It's a Bible name, sir," said Manlinson, "leastways it's *part* of a name as you'll find somewhere in the Books of Chronicles. I don't exactly mind whereabouts. I don't know what made her mother give it her, I'm sure. I were away at sea, or maybe I should have told her it sounded too

grand-like for plain folk like we ; but there, I couldn't alter it afterwards."

"No need to alter it," said the doctor, who, as he glanced at the girl's eyes, thought she could not have been better named. "How did you come to have such a daughter, though? What are you fit for, child? You don't sell fish in the market, do you?"

"No, sir," answered Hazel, blushing; "mother doesn't care for me to do that."

"Ah, I thought not," said the doctor. "Well, are you any good at nursing?"

"I have never tried," she answered, simply, "but I can do what I am told. I am not afraid."

"Weren't you afraid when you found that gentleman up there in a dead faint?" asked Dr. Lane.

"I don't know," said Hazel; "there wasn't any time to be frightened—at least to *think* about it. It is no good to be frightened when there are things to be done."

"You'll do," said the doctor. "Manlinson," he added, as the lighthouse-keeper opened the door to let him out, "what are you going to do with that girl of yours? Send her to service?"

"No, sir," said Manlinson, quietly; "seems like she ain't fit for service. She's a queer girl, sir; she ain't like any girls I ever saw. She's all for books, and music, and such like; but she's a good girl, too, and she'll help her mother—only the work don't seem natural to her."

"I thought I had heard something of that sort," said the doctor. "Well, keep her here along with you, and let her do what she likes. She doesn't look strong enough for service, and she's too pretty by half. Let her run about on the rocks, and be a mermaid, or anything she likes. Good day. Be sure to send for me if he should be worse; I'll look in to-morrow. Is this the way? What a shockingly lonely place, to be sure!"

"Now, Hazel," said her father, when the doctor had gone, "your mother and me we're going to look after this poor young gentleman till he gets well. Maybe to-morrow we'll be able to find out if there's anybody he'd like us to write to for him. I'm going over to the town now to get in a few things your mother wants for him."

"Is he very ill, father?" asked Hazel, wistfully, "He won't die, will he?"

"Die! Bless you, no, child," said the lighthouse-keeper, cheerfully. "His left arm's broke, and the tree gave him a nasty blow on the side, as pains him a good bit; but the doctor has made him as comfortable as he can, and he'll get well quick enough, you'll see. He's a plucky young chap, and when he gets over his faint he'll be lively enough. But the pain makes him keep fainty-like, and your mother's going to stop along with him. Light the lamps for me, there's a good lass, if I'm not home time enough."

"Yes, father," said Hazel. "I'm going to get mother a cup of tea now, and you and I will have ours together when you come back."

"I'm glad he won't die," she said to herself, as she stirred the fire and set the kettle on to boil; "I mean that the doctor doesn't think he will. He is so beautiful, and he loves music so much! He must not die! I wonder if he has any one to care about him, and to come and nurse him? I should think his sister will come as soon as she knows he is here; I would if I were his sister. She could have my room, and I would sleep downstairs. I wonder if he has come to mend more organs, and if he will talk to me about them when he gets well? He looked so much like Miss Lillian, when he was lying there on the rocks, with his face quite white like hers. Perhaps she knows something about him, and where his sister is."

Arthur Thursfield lay tossing in pain and feverishness all that night. He could not sleep, and his mind wandered,

except for very short intervals. He was under the delusion that Mrs. Manlinson was his Aunt Winifred, and almost hurt the poor woman's feelings by his reproaches to her for keeping his sister away from him—not even allowing her to come and see him when he was ill!

"Bless your dear heart, sir!" she said to him, soothingly, "*I* wouldn't keep your sister away from you! Couldn't you tell me where she is now, and we'll send for her directly?"

But then Arthur would mutter something about organs and churches, and would ramble on upon that subject for a long time, and Mrs. Manlinson found that it was useless to try to make any discoveries that night. All she could do was to try to soothe his restlessness, and she was glad when towards morning he dropped off to sleep at last.

"Poor young man!" she said. "We'll find out about his sister as soon as we can, and we'll write to her to come. Hazel shall turn out her room to-day. I wish I'd caught the name he called his aunt, but he didn't speak it clearly enough for me to hear. He seems pretty comfortable now, so I may as well try and get a bit of sleep myself."

And Mrs. Manlinson did not wake till it was broad daylight, when she found her daughter standing by her side with a breakfast tray in her hands. Arthur woke just as Hazel was leaving the room.

"Is that your daughter?" he said. "Did you say this was the lighthouse? Who brought me here?"

"My husband and me, we brought you," answered Mrs. Manlinson, delighted to hear him speak rationally; "and we're going to take care of you till you get well. You're a bit hurt with a nasty branch as fell off a tree yesterday in a storm, and you must just keep quiet till you gets better. Yes, that's my daughter Hazel; she found you lying there on them rocks, and called us to help you. She's brought

you your breakfast. Come, you'll drink a drop of this tea, won't you? She's a rare one for making tea, Hazel is."

Arthur drank the tea eagerly. "My arm is broken, isn't it?" he said. "Is there anything else the matter? Shall I have to be here long?"

"Not so very long," said Mrs. Manlinson, cheerfully. "You've hurt your side a bit, too; it pains you, don't it? There, don't talk, only if you could tell me where your sister is, maybe she'd like to come and nurse you."

"My sister?" said Arthur, in a half-bewildered tone. "Ah, yes! this is Pointhaven, isn't it? What do you know about my sister?"

"I don't know nothing, sir," she answered, quietly, "only you was a-calling for your sister last night, and we don't know where to send for her."

"I'll—I'll think about it," said Arthur, closing his eyes wearily. "I'll tell you by-and-by. I can't think yet. I shall have to write a letter——"

But the exertion of speaking made him turn deadly faint again, and he put his hand to his side with a stifled groan. Mrs. Manlinson gave him a little drop of brandy and water, and when he had revived a little, she busied herself in putting the room to rights till her husband came to relieve guard. Then she went down and called her daughter.

"Hazel," she said, "I was putting away the young gentleman's things just now, and I see *this* name marked on 'em," and she gave Hazel a handkerchief with *A. Thursfield* marked in the corner. "I thought you said his name was Miller?"

"So it is, mother," said Hazel; "at least he was called Mr. Miller when he was here before. Why, mother, this is Miss Lilian's name!"

"So it is!" exclaimed Mrs. Manlinson. "Well now, to be sure! *She* ain't going to turn out his sister, of all things!"

"Don't you think he is like her, mother?" said Hazel. "I think so. But I suppose he doesn't wish his real name to be known here, so we must not tell anybody about this. You won't tell, except father, will you, mother?"

"No; not I," replied her mother. "Poor young gentleman! You may depend there's something wrong, Hazel, or he wouldn't have to turn out and work for his bread, a-mending them organs, and his own sister living as fine as can be, with plenty of everything she wants."

"Perhaps there is," said Hazel, thoughtfully. And she said to herself—"I believe it is that cross Miss Raymond's fault, whatever it is. But can he really be Miss Lilian's brother? I always thought she must be my own little girl, and she never said she *wasn't*—I remember that."

"Well, give me the handkerchief, and I'll put it back with his things," said Mrs. Manlinson, "and we won't say nothing to nobody, not even the doctor, for he might go and talk. I've kept secrets before now, and I won't let this one out. My! how it do storm still! That were a nasty great branch, Hazel, and it's a mercy it didn't kill him! And it's a mercy you made up your mind to go to the blind gentleman for your lessons, or he might have lain there, and nobody seen him, for nobody knows how long."

Hazel shuddered. It was a mercy, indeed. For how dreadful it would have been if he had died there, all alone on the rocks, in that cold wind and rain!—How dreadful for poor Miss Lilian!

Arthur remained very ill all that day and the next night, but on the following day he was less restless, and after a quiet sleep in the morning, awoke in a much more natural state than he had been in since the accident. He was looking round his small apartment, and thinking, in a dreamy sort of fashion, over his unexpected position—a prisoner in a lighthouse—when there came a soft tap at his

door, and Hazel entered, bringing him some jelly. He took a little of it, and then watched the slight graceful figure moving about the room, as Hazel put it to rights in a noiseless fashion, which he found pleasanter than her mother's more bustling movements.

"You are Hazel, are you not?" he said, as she was about to leave the room again. "Will you stay a few minutes? I want to ask you if you will do something for me?"

"I will do anything I can, sir," said Hazel, with a rather wistful look at the pale face of the young stranger. "What is it you would like me to do?"

Arthur hesitated. "I don't want everybody to know," he said, colouring a little; "but I think I may trust you. You will tell no one, if I tell you something?"

"No, indeed," said Hazel, earnestly.

"I have a sister," said Arthur, "and I should like her to know that I am here. She is expecting to see me. I have been here two days, haven't I? She will be wondering where I am. I thought perhaps you would tell her."

"Yes," said Hazel, drawing her breath, eagerly, "she will come to you. Shall I write for you?"

"No," he answered, slowly; "I think, if you don't mind, you had better go to her. You know the Tower?"

"Oh, yes!" said Hazel. "I have been there once or twice. Miss Lilian is very kind to me."

"She is my sister," said Arthur. "I am Arthur Thursfield; but don't let anybody know. I am called Miller while I am here, for reasons—I can't talk any more now; Lilian will tell you. I think they will let her come to me now. Ask her to come if she can."

"Indeed I will," said Hazel. "Shall I go now—directly?"

"Yes, please," said Arthur. "Don't frighten her. Tell her I am better; I am, you know. I shall be quite well soon."

"I hope you will," said Hazel earnestly, as he looked up and smiled brightly. "Dr. Lane is very clever. And I have asked God to make you well. I am so glad you are Miss Lilian's brother!"

Arthur smiled again, but he could not say any more. His side was still very painful, and made speaking difficult to him. He closed his eyes, as if he were satisfied, and Hazel dressed quickly, and after explaining to her mother what she was going to do, ran down to the cove, drew out the little boat, and pushed herself off across the bay.





CHAPTER XXI.

"What we can do we'll do, to do you service."

—*Timon of Athens.*

LILIAN THURSFIELD was reading aloud to her aunts in the drawing-room at the Tower when a servant entered, saying that the girl from the lighthouse had come to see Miss Lilian, and was waiting in the hall.

"Miss Lilian is engaged," said Miss Winifred, who took every opportunity of discouraging her niece's friendship with the lighthouse girl; "you can tell her so. I daresay she does not want anything particular. She requires to be checked a great deal."

"Please, ma'am," said the girl, "she said as there was something very particular she had to tell Miss Lilian—something as couldn't wait. She wouldn't keep her long, she said."

Lilian looked imploringly at her aunt.

"I must speak to her, please, Aunt Winifred," she said; "she may be in some trouble. I will come back and finish the reading as soon as possible."

"Well, go," said Miss Raymond; "but don't let her impose upon you. She will take every advantage, you may be sure."

Lilian hastened into the hall, where Hazel eagerly poured

out her story. Lilian had been wondering why Arthur had not paid her his promised visit, having heard the previous week that his holiday was to commence in a day or two; but no idea of his meeting with any accident had entered her head, and she turned pale when she heard of his injuries.

"Please don't be frightened, Miss Lilian," said Hazel; "he told me to be sure not to frighten you, and to tell you he was better already, and will soon be all right again. And mother thinks he is going on as well as he can, and she is a very good nurse, Miss Lilian."

"I am very much obliged to her for taking care of my brother," said Lilian, earnestly. "Are you quite sure you have room for me at the lighthouse? I should like to go back with you at once, if you have."

"Indeed we have," said Hazel, "and we will try to make you comfortable, Miss Lilian. I can carry anything for you, and mother said she would be getting the room ready while I came here."

"Your mother won't tell anybody—or your father, will they?" asked Lilian, anxiously. "For nobody in Point-haven knows that I have a brother, and my Aunt Winifred would be very much vexed if they found it out. Can you manage to hide me away if anyone comes to the house?"

"Oh, yes," said Hazel, smiling; "we will keep it quite secret, and not even the doctor need know you are in the house. My father and mother won't tell anybody. Mother found out the gentleman's name by seeing it on a handkerchief when she was putting away his things. And it was this afternoon he told me that you were his sister, and asked me to come to you."

"I am sure we can trust you all," said Lilian. "As we walk along, I will explain to you why my brother calls himself by a name that is not his own while he is here. I will be ready in a few minutes."

"Well, what does the girl want?" asked Miss Raymond as Lilian re-entered the drawing-room. "What are you so pale for, Lilian? I do wish these common people would not bring us their horrible tales of illnesses and accidents! They have no notion of refinement or delicacy, and are enough to shock the strongest nerves."

"Arthur is ill, Aunt Winifred," said Lilian; "he is at the lighthouse, and wants me to go to him. He has broken his arm, and hurt his side very much, and they are nursing him there. I must go at once, and help to take care of him."

"Arthur ill at the lighthouse!" exclaimed Miss Raymond. "I do think he might have chosen a less inconvenient place to be ill in! But it is all of a piece with his ridiculous, romantic notions! How did he break his arm? and what was he doing at the lighthouse?" Lilian repeated all that Hazel had told her of the manner in which the accident had happened, and suggested that Arthur had probably taken the cliff road from the station, instead of walking through the town.

"Very absurd in him, on such a stormy day," said Miss Winifred. "He should have had more sense. I wish he would keep away from Pointhaven! And what can you be dreaming of, Lilian, wanting to go to the lighthouse and nurse him? Do you want all Pointhaven to know that I have a nephew who has disgraced me?"

"They will not know, aunt," said Lilian, biting her lips with vexation. "The lighthouse is such a lonely place; no one need know I am there."

"But my dear Lilian," said Miss Raymond, scornfully, "do you for a moment suppose that those people at the lighthouse are any more to be trusted than other people of the lower orders? Will not that woman gossip to all her neighbours, on every opportunity, about Arthur and yourself?"

"I think not, dear Winifred," said Miss Evelyn, timidly ; "they are honest people, those Manlinsons. I really think we may safely trust them. And as Lilian says, the lighthouse is so much out of the way, that anyone might remain there in perfect concealment."

"There is the doctor," said Miss Winifred ; "you forget him. Doctors can gossip as much as anybody else, if not more. Talk of women gossiping ! Men are quite as bad—indeed I believe worse, as they are in all other respects. The doctor will soon blaze it abroad that Mr. Miller is the brother of Miss Thursfield, and you will be congratulated, Lilian, wherever you go, upon the recovery of the young man from Woodward's !"

"I shall keep out of the doctor's way, aunt," said Lilian. "I can easily do that, and if he asks any questions about Arthur, the Manlinsons will know how to answer him. Indeed I must go, Aunt Winnie ! Think of poor Arthur, ill and suffering, in that lonely lighthouse ! I want to go to him at once."

"Winifred, I am sure she is right," said Miss Evelyn ; "it is her duty to go to her brother. Let us leave the consequences ; we may be sure that all will be ordered rightly."

"It is most inconvenient," said Miss Raymond. "How will you be accommodated, child, and how will you carry what you need in the way of clothing ?"

"A little bag will hold all I want at present, aunt," said Lilian, eagerly, "and Hazel will carry it for me. I will get ready at once. I shall have Hazel's room ; it is a very pretty one, and very comfortable. I shall enjoy staying in the lighthouse immensely."

"Get ready," said Miss Raymond, shortly. "Of all people in this world, I believe Arthur is the most troublesome. This will put a stop to his work for a time, for a broken arm cannot be trifled with. I hope it will teach him a lesson, and that the loss of time and expense of

doctor's bills will bring him to his senses. If he had been at the University this would not have happened."

"It might have, dear Winifred," said Miss Evelyn, gently. "It was perhaps a little imprudent in Arthur to walk along the cliff, and especially through a wood, during such a hurricane; but the accident has nothing to do with his business in any way. It might have happened to anyone."

Miss Winifred plied her needle industriously, and deigned no reply. She wished Lilian good-bye coldly, but Miss Evelyn followed her into the hall, and whispered—

"I shall walk over in a day or so, dear child, and bring a few things which Arthur may find acceptable, and see how he is going on. And when you want anything, I am sure Hazel will gladly come over for it."

"Indeed I will," said Hazel, thinking what a kind, sweet face Miss Evelyn had, and how much pleasanter she was than Miss Winifred. "Mother will do her best to make Miss Lilian comfortable," she added, "and to make Mr.—Mr. Miller well."

"I am quite sure of that," said Miss Evelyn. "Good-bye, and enjoy your imprisonment all you can, Lilian. If the Stuarts come, we shall tell them that you are out for a few days' visit to a friend."

As the two girls walked down to the beach, Lilian explained to Hazel, as far as she could, the reason of her brother's appearing at Pointhaven under a feigned name. She told her that her brother and herself had a great trouble, and that Arthur's anxiety to remove it had led him to enter the organ-building business, which step her Aunt Winifred very much disapproved of, and that he had been forbidden by her to enter her house in consequence. What the trouble was she did not say, and Hazel could not guess, but whatever it was, she felt quite sure that the young gentleman had done no wrong in trying to remove it, for his

face was much too good and beautiful for any wrong-doing to be possible on his part, and she never would believe that there had been any. She believed it was all the fault of that stern-looking Miss Raymond, under whose late reproofs her own proud spirit still writhed.

Arthur's pale face frightened his sister when she crept into his room and found him sleeping soundly. But she felt very thankful to be near him, and resolved that she would not leave him to please anybody, till he was well and strong enough to go back to his work. She sat and watched him while he slept, longing for him to wake and speak to her. It seemed like a dream, the sudden summons to this wild place, with the surging sound of the waves against the rocks outside, and the sight of her brother lying pale and unconscious in the funny little white-washed room, with its tiny window looking out upon miles and miles of sea.

Arthur woke at last, and a bright flush of pleasure came over his face as he recognised his sister. He held out his hand, and drew her down to him, whispering—

"How good of Aunt Winifred to let you come! Isn't it strange for me to be lying ill here? They are very good to me, and I'm getting on famously, but my arm won't be good for much for some time, I suppose. Tiresome, isn't it?"

"Don't think about that now," said Lilian. "I expect you will get well very fast, now I have come to look after you! You know I am such a good nurse! Hazel has been telling me that the doctor says you are not to talk, so you are to obey orders, and only *look* at me till you are better. I shall stay here as long as you do, and take care of you. I see they have made you very comfortable."

"I think they have brought all the comforts of the house in here," said Arthur, smiling, "except what are reserved for you. They are kind people. There—I won't talk.

You will want some books, though ; you had better borrow some of Hazel's ; you told me she had some."

"I popped one or two into my bag," said Lilian, "to amuse myself with, and to read to you when you are better, and Aunt Evelyn is coming to-morrow to bring some nice things for you, and I dare say she will bring a few more. How pleasant the sea sounds—like a cradle song to send you to sleep."

"Yes," said Arthur, "it is a companion to me—especially at night ; I like listening to it. It is pleasant to have you here, Water-lily."

Lilian found it pleasant too—at least after the first two or three days. During them she was too anxious to think about much except her brother's suffering. He bore it uncomplainingly, but she saw that he *did* suffer great pain at times, and in her youth and inexperience she felt more anxiety than was really necessary. However, though there was no danger, Arthur's hurts were bad enough to make great care necessary, and it was a relief to all in the lighthouse when Dr. Lane pronounced both side and arm to be in a fair way of recovery. Lilian carefully kept out of the doctor's way, and fortunately he was not of a very curious disposition, and asked but few questions about his patient. Mrs. Manlinson explained that "the young gentleman was out on a holiday, and as far as she could make out, didn't seem to have no home in particular," and with that Dr. Lane appeared satisfied.

Miss Evelyn had paid not only her promised visit, but two or three more, and each time she took care to bring with her a little store of such things as she thought might be acceptable, both to the invalid and to her imprisoned niece.

"It is very like imprisonment," said Lilian, laughing, as she sat with Arthur one evening, about a week after her arrival. "Something like Napoleon at St. Helena, only

my space is even narrower than his ! I amuse myself sometimes with thinking that I am undergoing banishment. One feels so entirely out of the world here, although it is not such a great distance from Pointhaven. And the sea being so very close—the sound of it, always dashing up from morning to night against the rocks—gives one a very lonely feeling here. I like it, but I think I should be afraid in very stormy weather, such as it was when you first came. It makes me almost frightened sometimes when I look out of the window, and see that great sea so close to us, looking as if it could so easily come just a little further, and sweep us away, lighthouse and all ! ”

“ He holdeth the waves in the hollow of His hand,” said Arthur, in a half dreamy voice. “ Lilian, I have been thinking, while I have been lying here—since I have been *able* to think—how weak and powerless we mortals are, after all—what a small thing will make us helpless. The other day I was walking along that cliff, feeling so strong and jolly, on my way to see you, and enjoying that grand wind and stormy sea like anything. And then, all in a minute, that tree knocked all the strength out of me before I had any thought of danger, and here I am for the present, good for nothing. When these things happen, what a comfort it is to feel that all our concerns are in the hands of One who is always strong and able to help us, and whose powers never fail as ours do ! I can’t think how those people live, Lily, who don’t believe in any Being greater than their poor, weak selves—who have only themselves and their own reason to depend on for comfort when they need it.”

“ Nor can I,” said Lilian ; “ I’m sure *we* couldn’t live so, Arthur ! How could we bear our trouble, if we didn’t feel sure that we have a Friend to leave it with ! I have been thinking about your accident too, Arthur dear, and how thankful we ought to be that it was no worse.”

"Yes," said Arthur, "I am thankful. As it is, I hope I shan't have to lose very much time. My holiday was to last a fortnight. My greatest trouble is the doctor's bill; it will run away with so much money! I can't afford the luxury of doctors' bills very well."

"No," said Lilian, sadly. "Never mind; don't worry about that yet. You won't have to pay it just yet, and I shall help."

"I dare say!" said Arthur, "Lilian, how did you manage to get here? I mean, to prevail over Aunt Winifred? What did she say to my adventure?"

"I think her first remark was, that it was like your romantic folly to be ill in such an inconvenient place!" answered Lilian, laughing. "Oh, she made a good many objections to my coming, but Aunt Evelyn supported me, and we won the victory at last. You see she knew I *must* come; the objections were only preliminary to consent."

Arthur smiled. "How glad I shall be when I can get out on those rocks!" he said. "The sound of the waves is delicious! I don't wonder that girl has grown up an uncommon creature in this wild place."

"She *is* uncommon," said Lilian. "Mr. Everard says she isn't like a girl of the lower orders at all in mind, and I am sure she isn't in person. I like her very much, and Aunt Evelyn is very much interested in her. I can't get Aunt Winifred to be so; she persists in thinking her forward and conceited."

"She isn't, though," said Arthur. "When I get downstairs I mean to watch her; I can't make her out. That's Dr. Lane's knock, Lily. Fly, or you'll be caught!"





CHAPTER XXII.

"But wonder on, till truth makes all things plain."

—*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

"**D**O you remember that nice-looking young fellow, who came down to superintend our organ-work last autumn, Mary?" said Mr. Stuart to his wife, as the family gathered round the tea-table one evening. "Dr. Lane tells me he has been imprisoned in the lighthouse for a week past, with a broken arm, and some damage to his left side."

"What! young Miller!" exclaimed Mrs. Stuart. "What has taken him there, I wonder? How did he break his arm?"

"I don't know what brought him to Pointhaven," answered her husband, "except that it seems he had a holiday, and I suppose he liked the place well enough last year to wish to come again. The accident happened on that stormy day the week before last; don't you remember we had quite a hurricane one afternoon? He was on the cliff, at the edge of the fir plantation, above Perilpoint, and was knocked over, and his arm broken by a large branch which was torn off one of the trees. The lighthouse girl found him, I believe, on her way home from the town, and he was taken down there as the nearest place, and Mrs. Manlinson is nursing him. She is a good nurse, Dr. Lane

says, and a clean, tidy woman, so I dare say they have made the poor fellow pretty comfortable."

"Quite a romantic little story!" said Katie. "Now he should fall in love with the lighthouse girl, and then it would be complete."

"Nonsense, my dear," said Mrs. Stuart. "Mr. Miller is far above the Manlinsons' daughter, and too sensible, I believe, to allow any romantic feeling of gratitude to lead him into such an unsuitable connection."

"Mr. Miller is a gentleman, I know," said Katie, "but you have no idea, mamma, how much like a lady Hazel Manlinson is! I don't mean that she dresses finely, and *tries* to look like one, like some of the ridiculous girls we see in the streets, but she really has the face, and manner, and tongue of a lady; hasn't she, Constance?"

"Yes, really," answered Constance. "She isn't in the least like other people of her station; she is as refined-looking as possible."

"It is a pity," said Mrs. Stuart, thoughtfully. "I am always sorry when there is that difference between children and their parents, for I don't think it is so happy and pleasant for either. However, I hope this girl's future won't be spoilt by her present training, I'm sure. You might go and see this young fellow, Walter; don't you think so? Mr. and Mrs. Roper can't get so far, and Mr. Jervis is away for his holiday. He must be very lonely, I am afraid."

"Well, I had been thinking about it," said Mr. Stuart. "Auriol was talking of walking over to Perilpoint in a day or two; they say there are fine specimens of the 'Crowned Eolus' to be found there. We will perhaps go together. Auriol is a nice fellow."

"Oh, papa!" said Katie. "He is a great deal too much of a bookworm! He does nothing but sit and think of his books, and if you meet him out anywhere, he doesn't

know in the least how to talk. He is as dull as possible. I don't like such shy, nervous people ; they are no fun, and ought not to go out into society."

"Rather hard upon them!" said Mr. Stuart. "But I beg leave to differ from you, Katie. Mr. Auriol is by no means 'dull.' He may be shy in ladies' company—for ladies are sometimes overwhelming, and a solitary bachelor must become accustomed to them by degrees—but I assure you he is a most interesting companion, and not at all given to reminding his friends that he is a senior wrangler."

"Well, papa, I will give up trying to make him talk," said Katie, "and will listen to his conversations with you instead ; then I may get to like him better. Are you going to ask him to our next 'Musical Evening,' mamma?"

"Yes, I think so," said Mrs. Stuart ; "papa says he has musical tastes. Did you call at the Tower this afternoon, Constance ? How is Miss Evelyn's cold ?"

"It is better," said Constance. "Lilian is away from home now ; Miss Raymond didn't say where, but she doesn't expect her back just yet."

"We won't have our party till she comes, will we, mamma?" asked Katie. "Lilian sings so nicely, we must have her. And Mr. Everard—you said you would ask him this time, mamma."

"So I did," said Mrs. Stuart, "and I will keep my word. Poor Mr. Everard ! I fear his has been a sad life !"

"I think it has," said Constance, "for Hazel Manlinson told Lilian that he lost his friends when he became poor. Horrid friends they must have been ! But I suppose they seemed all right enough at first. I wonder how he lost his money ? I don't believe it was through extravagance."

"Well, I don't know," said Katie. "If all his friends

deserted him, I shouldn't think they would have done it without a reason."

" 'When fortune, in her shift and change of mood,
Spurns down her late belov'd, all his dependants
Which laboured after him to the mountain-top,
Even on their hands and knees, let him slip down,
Not one accompanying his declining foot,' "

quoted Mr. Stuart. "There are friends of that sort, Katie, and one doesn't always find them out while fortune is in her *good* mood ; but let her change her tune, and I fear there are plenty of people who don't care to accompany their friends' 'declining foot,' but who, having reached the 'mountain-top,' stay there, and enjoy themselves, forgetting that they were once at the bottom themselves, and may fall again."

"Well, of course, those were never true friends," said Katie. "I think people ought to find out whether their friends are true or not before they trust them ; I should, I know."

"You don't always do that," said Mr. Stuart. "You don't know much of the world after all, Katie, my dear, though you are inclined to think you do. I knew a man who was an exceedingly good judge of character, and who was deceived entirely in one who had been, as he thought, his dearest friend. It is one of the greatest trials one has to bear, losing faith in a friend ; but I assure you, it is a trial the wisest man may experience, Katie, though *your* wisdom shakes its head."

"Ah well !" said Katie, "I will give Mr. Everard credit for not having deserved to lose his friends. I like him now, shabby clothes and all."

"Because they haven't been quite so shabby lately," said Constance, with a smile.

"I haven't seen much difference," said Katie. "Then

you will really go and see Mr. Miller, papa? I am sure he must be very lonely out there in the lighthouse."

"Yes, I shall go and see him," said Mr. Stuart. "I liked the young fellow; and he might be glad to have a few books lent him, when he is able to read. I dare say the Manlinsons' stock is small."

"Francis and I will walk over there some day," said Constance. "Francis took a fancy to Mr. Miller. How this accident has spoilt his holiday! and I dare say it is not a very long one. I wonder what made him take to the organ business. He looks such a gentleman."

"Well, making organs is much more interesting than making wine," said Katie, "and Dr. Kirby's son went into the wine trade, and he is a gentleman. I believe Mr. Miller is too. Perhaps he has had misfortunes. I feel dreadfully curious about people, mamma! and it is very provoking, because none of you will sympathise with me. I am as curious as possible about this Mr. Miller, and about Lilian Thursfield too, for she as much as confessed to me one day that there was a secret in the family. I would give anything to find it out! And Constance doesn't care to in the least; she is quite content with saying that it is no business of ours!"

"Well, it isn't," said Constance. "If Lilian wished us to know it, she would tell us, and I *don't* feel particularly curious about it. Many people don't care to tell everything about themselves to everybody else—especially to individuals like you, Katie, who would make up a romance out of something very simple. And I don't see why we should be so curious about Mr. Miller at all, when we know how many people come to Pointhaven in the year, just for the beautiful scenery and fine air."

"But he has broken his arm, and is shut up in the lighthouse," said Katie, "and things like that don't happen to ordinary people. And when there is a beautiful and very

uncommon sort of girl in the lighthouse, of course one *must* make a romance. You are so prosy, Constance!"

"Don't say things of that sort to anybody else, Katie," said Mrs. Stuart, "for they might make mischief. I should have a very low opinion of that lighthouse girl if she entrapped a young man, so far above her in position, into falling in love with her. I feel a special interest in Mr. Miller. I thought him so particularly clever and intelligent, when I saw him last year, and he has such a *good* as well as pleasant face. I was quite struck with it."

"Oh, I won't make any mischief, mamma, dear," said Katie. "You know I must talk to somebody, and I think it is best to talk at home, lest my tongue should rattle too fast when I am with other people. I shouldn't like to shock *them*, but here, you know, you all understand well enough what I mean. When I am looking forward to being married in three months, like Constance, I shall be very sober, and give up making romances."

Constance's face flushed, and a very happy smile came over it, as she glanced at her sister. It was true that in three months' time she was to become the wife of Francis Winterton. He had obtained a living in a pleasant country town only a few miles from Pointhaven, and there was now no reason for deferring the wedding any longer. In her quiet fashion, Constance was very happy, and much looking forward to the time when she would join Mr. Winterton at Stonecroft, and assist him in his new labours as vicar of a large parish. Her father and mother dreaded the thought of losing her; she had been so helpful to them in every way since the time of her leaving school, and at present Katie did not show much sign of taking up her sister's work with any amount of interest. However, they hoped that when Constance had really left them, Katie's interest in parish work would develop itself, for she was a good child, with all her chattering and romantic notions, and when left to

herself would no doubt become more womanly and dependable. Katie was very outspoken, and, as she often told her parents, it was the "worst part of her which came to the top." Underneath her somewhat giddy exterior there was a great deal of earnestness and right feeling, which, they believed, would in *its* turn "come to the top" some day.





CHAPTER XXIII.

"With all my heart I'll sit and hear her sing."

—*Henry IV.*

ARTHUR and Lilian Thursfield found their imprisonment in the lighthouse very delightful, when Arthur was well enough to come downstairs and get out upon the rocks and breathe the fresh sea air. It was mild weather for November, the October storms having been followed by bright sunshine and soft, pleasant wind, which enabled Arthur and his sister to spend hours out of doors, and by degrees, as the former grew stronger, to explore the rocks to their heart's content. The little sitting-room had been given up to their use, having been specially adorned by Hazel, after her own fashion, for the reception of visitors, and there also they spent many pleasant hours together, reading or chatting, when it rained, or was too cold to stay out long. Hazel was glad when Arthur came down, and was able to walk out and see the beauties of Perilpoint—the seaweed-covered peaks, with the foam dashing over them, and the shells and curious sea-creatures, which were her own delight. She felt sure that he would enjoy them, and love them as she did herself, and she wished that she were in Lilian's place, that she might have the pleasure of pointing them out to him, and hearing how much they delighted him. She often watched him and his

sister from a secure hiding-place in the rocks, as they paced up and down together, or clambered down to the water's edge, and sat there at the foot of the rocks when the tide was low. She thought they seemed so happy together, and she envied Lilian for having such a brother as Mr. Miller—or Mr. *Thursfield*, as she now called him to herself. She wished she had such a brother, and spent hours in thinking over all she would say to him, and all they would talk about together. She felt sad and lonely, as she watched the two who seemed so happy and contented in each other's company. She had no one to sympathise with her and love her just as Mr. Thursfield loved his sister. Her father's and mother's love was different; there was not much sympathy in it. While Hazel knew that they loved her dearly, and were proud of her, she also knew that there was a perpetual barrier between herself and them, and she felt as if the barrier were *in* herself. She could not feel or think as they did, or be satisfied with the things which satisfied them; her life seemed to want so much more to fill it than theirs did, and her own love for them sometimes dissatisfied her. She *did* love them very much, but it did not feel, she thought, like the love she had read of and heard of between parents and children. Her parents did not understand her, and therefore could not sympathise with her, or be companions to her, and she felt as if she could love them so much better if they did. She felt that love could not be perfect without sympathy, and so her love for her father and mother could not be perfect, and she was vexed, and often thought she must be very wicked *not* to feel that perfect love for a father and mother who were so good and kind to her. If only she had some one young like herself to be a companion to her—some one who could be to her as Mr. Thursfield was to his sister—how delightful it would be! Miss Lilian always looked so proud of her brother, and liked so much to wait on him, and do all

she could for him, and Hazel would have liked to do the same. She envied Lilian her sisterly privileges, and then felt ashamed of herself, that she, a lighthouse girl, should dare to wish for any special notice or kindness from a gentleman like Mr. Thursfield. Only when he had talked to her about the organ in St. Mary's Church, and had played it to her, it had been so pleasant! And she had been so intensely happy—so *satisfied*—just while that hour lasted, that she could not help wishing for a little bit more happiness of the same kind.

Now and then she and Lilian had a pleasant day together, for Arthur sometimes went out with Manlinson for a day upon the water—which did him good—when he was not strong enough to walk much. And while he was away, Lilian called Hazel into the sitting-room, and they spent some happy hours together over books and drawing. Lilian had a good deal of taste for the latter, and Hazel was very much interested in this new study; she had always thought it must be very delightful to make pictures, but Mr. Everard could not help her in *that* branch of study, and it was an intense interest and amusement to her to sit by Lilian at the parlour-window and watch her as she sketched the sea, and the little corner of the beach which was visible, with the fishing-huts and bright-coloured dresses of the fishwives to set off the picture, and the little tossing boats in the bay, or else the white sails gleaming in the distance, far away across the water. And sometimes, while Lilian sketched, Hazel read to her, and then they talked over what they read, and Lilian explained what Hazel could not understand. But she found that her pupil had a very quick understanding, and often asked questions which were too deep for her to answer.

"I can't tell you that, Hazel," she said one day, in answer to one of the girl's questions; "you must wait

till Arthur comes home, and I will ask him. He knows much more than I do."

"It must be very nice to have a brother," said Hazel, with a wistful sigh. "I wish I had one—one I could talk to, just as you talk to your brother! It seems so pleasant."

Lilian smiled brightly. "It is very pleasant," she said. "I don't know what I should do without my brother. It is such a treat to me to be here, spending this time with him, for I see so little of him now."

"Then I am glad he came here," said Hazel, "for perhaps if he had been taken anywhere else your aunt would not have allowed you to come and nurse him, would she, Miss Lilian?"

"I *would* have come, somehow, wherever he had been," said Lilian; "but it is much pleasanter here, where we are so little troubled with visitors, and I can so well hide myself! It was very kind of Mr. Stuart to come and see my brother the other day; how little he thought that I was in the lighthouse too!"

Hazel laughed. "No one shall find out that you have been here, Miss Lilian," she said. "I will never tell, and neither will father or mother. But, Miss Lilian, will your aunt not forgive your brother some day?"

"I don't know," said Lilian, sadly; "we hope so, but we don't think she will yet. She was very angry with him for going into the organ business, and she can't get over it; but it was his duty to earn all the money he could, and he could not have earned any for years if he had gone to the University, as she wished. You must not tell anybody what I say to you, Hazel, but we want to save up a great deal of money—my brother and I—for a very special purpose. I can't tell you what it is—it is a secret."

"And will you get enough soon, do you think?" asked Hazel, wistfully. "I wish I could help you, Miss Lilian!"

"We shan't have enough yet for some long time,"

answered Lilian ; "but we hope in a few years we shall be able to do what we want. Arthur is so good, and gives up so much—too much, I tell him ; for I can't bear to think of his having so few comforts, when I have so many. I am quite glad of this change and rest for him, now the danger is over, and I am not frightened any longer."

"He looks very good," said Hazel, earnestly, "and I am very glad he is getting well. It is a good thing he is fond of the sea, isn't it, Miss Lilian? for father says he will soon get strong when he has been out with him a few more times for a day on the water. Look, there is the boat coming back, a long, long way off. I always know father's boat ; I have watched for it so often. I will go and light the lamps, for it is getting dark, and then Mr. Thursfield will see how pretty the lights look in the distance. They look so warm and bright, Miss Lilian, when you are a long way out at sea, and it is getting cold and dark ; and then, as you get nearer and nearer, the light gets bigger and brighter, till you get right into the red waves.. I used to like rowing through those red waves when I was little ; I used to call them the 'Red Sea.'"

Lilian laughed. "I think I should like to row through them now," she said. "I will come and see you light the lamps, and we will go out on the gallery to watch the boat come in. Do you often go out with your father, Hazel?"

"Often in the summer," said Hazel. "Sometimes he goes with several other men, and of course I don't go then, but when he is alone I like to go. Once I was out all night with him, and there was a storm—not a very bad one, and there was no danger, father said, so I liked it. The sea was so grand, Miss Lilian, and the boat felt such a tiny thing on the great waves! I remember father tied me to the mast, so that the wind should not blow me over, it was so strong!"

"I should have been afraid," said Lilian. "I am not

brave like you, and I am a very bad sailor; I should not like at all to be out in a storm. I only like being on the water when it is quite calm, as it is on hot summer days."

"I don't care for it then," said Hazel; "it is no fun. I suppose I have learnt not to be afraid of the water from having always lived so close to it. I am only afraid of shipwrecks. When I think of them I am so frightened that I can't bear to look at the water. Sometimes I think I must have seen a dreadful shipwreck when I was a very little child, for I seem to remember something—something very, very far away; but when I ask mother, she tells me I am always fancying things. Only that doesn't feel like a fancy, because it frightens me."

"Don't think about it," said Lilian; "nobody likes to think of shipwrecks; they are very dreadful, I think. See, the boat will soon be in. How pretty the lighted water is!"

"What did you do with yourself all yesterday, Water-lily?" asked Arthur, as he and his sister strolled arm-in-arm about the rocks the following morning. "I was so sleepy when I came in last night, after all that sea air, that I don't believe I spoke half-a-dozen words to you, did I?"

"I don't think you did," answered Lilian, laughing. "You looked too tired to do anything but sleep. I had a very pleasant day, talking to Hazel, and reading with her. She is so clever, Arthur! I can't imagine where she got her ideas from. Her father and mother are very good sort of people, but they don't know much. Sometimes I can't believe that Hazel belongs to them; she is so different."

"I am glad you have been helping her," said Arthur. "Where does she hide herself all day? I hardly ever have a glimpse of her, except when she is sent in to wait on us."

"She wanders about here on the rocks a good deal when she isn't helping her mother," said Lilian. "I see her sometimes hidden away in a corner, watching us with a

most wistful face. I think she longs for a companion, poor girl ; of course her father and mother are no companions to her."

"Is that her voice?" asked Arthur, suddenly. "Isn't that some one singing?"

"Yes, that is Hazel," said Lilian. "She often sings ; she has a beautiful voice. I know where she is. Come this way and you will hear her ; she makes songs of her own sometimes—such pretty ones."

They moved quietly to the edge of the rocks in the direction of the voice, and looking down, saw the lighthouse maiden sitting on a rocky perch overhanging the water, her brown locks tossing in the wind, which had unceremoniously pulled them down over her shoulders, and her face resting on her hand, as she gazed out over the water, and sang her own songs.

"Sit down a few minutes," whispered Lilian ; "the wind isn't cold, and here is a sheltered seat under this rock. I want you to hear her sing."

"She has a beautiful voice, certainly," said Arthur, when the song was finished ; "it is so rich and musical, and full of expression. Do you say it is a song of her own, Lily?"

"Yes," answered Lilian ; "I have heard her sing it before. Listen ! this is another of her own she is beginning."

"She looks like a mermaid sitting there, half in the water, with her long hair flowing," whispered Arthur, with a smile. "Isn't it a shame to listen like this behind her back ? I wonder what she would say if she knew. Her voice ought to be cultivated, and yet I don't know if it would be more delightful than it is now. Lily, we didn't bargain to hear morning concerts free of charge !"

"No," said Lilian, "but I have often wanted you to hear Hazel sing ; I knew you would enjoy it. She really

has a wonderful love of music, Arthur, and I am very glad Mr. Everard is teaching her, though a great many people blame him for it."

"They know nothing about it," said Arthur, rather shortly. "In that one half-hour which I spent with her in St. Mary's, I could tell she was no ordinary girl, and ought not to be treated like one. I saw what an intense love she had for music. You should have seen her face while I was playing! I think it is utterly absurd to teach servant girls to play the piano, and anything of that sort, and wrong, too; but in this case it is quite different. The usual rules of life don't apply to this girl, as far as I can see."

"No, not in the least," said Lilian. "I stand up very strongly in defence of Mr. Everard, I assure you, and I am getting Constance and Katie Stuart to be on my side by degrees. Come away now; the concert is over, and she will see us."

Quite unaware that her songs had been heard, Hazel presently sprang up the rocks, and without seeing Arthur and Lilian, who had wandered on in the opposite direction, ran back to the lighthouse, to put her unruly locks in order, before going to Mr. Everard.

"Off again, lass?" said her mother. "What hast been after out there, nigh again the fishes?"

"I've only been singing, mother," said Hazel, "and now I'm going to the town for my lessons, and to help Mr. Everard. Do you want anything in the town, mother? I'm going over the bay, so I can easily bring back anything you want in the boat."

"I don't think there's anything wanted," said her mother. "Stay, you'd better run into the parlour, and look in the cupboard. Maybe Miss Lilian will be wanting some more of that jelly for her brother, and you can bring what is wanted."

"Is she there, mother?" asked Hazel.

"No, they're out, both of 'em, walking up towards the cliff," said Mrs. Manlinson. "Here, take this basket, and bring me a few fresh eggs, if you can get 'em; Mr. Thursfield likes 'em. He's lookin' a good bit better, don't ye think?"

"Oh yes!" said Hazel, "ever so much better! I think he has looked better ever since Miss Lillian came."

"Well, she's a sweet young lady, sure enough," said Mrs. Manlinson, "so affable-like and gentle, and I'm sure her kindness to you is wonderful, Hazel, child! And the young gentleman—well, there, he is a gentleman, and that's all about it, and it's a pleasure to have to wait on him. Do folks ask you questions when you go into the town?"

"Not many," said Hazel. "I don't stop to speak to anybody, and if the girls call after me I don't answer them; they are rude, and I don't like them. Mr. Thursfield's affairs are no business of theirs, and I don't talk about them to anybody, mother."

"That's a good lass," said Mrs. Manlinson, approvingly, "only don't ye be settin' up your head above all your neighbours; you know, child, you haven't got no call to do that. What makes you so proud, lassie, eh?"

"I don't think I'm proud, mother," said Hazel, slowly; "I don't mean to be; but I don't feel as if I want to stop and talk to all the girls as I go along the streets. I don't *want* to do it, mother, and I never think about it. I never have anything to say to them."

"Well, you're a queer one," said her mother, affectionately. "I don't care for you to talk to 'em, for they ain't much good, some of them girls, only folks say you're proud, and I don't care for 'em to say it. I don't know as it ain't a bit true, though! Well, run off with you, and mind you're back in time to get Miss Thursfield's tea ready, for you can make it look pretty-like. I seems

clumsy about them things, and can't do 'em like gentlefolk can—settin' out tables and such like."

Hazel ran off, and Arthur and Lilian saw her, a few minutes afterwards, rowing across the bay, and heard her singing as she went.

"She must have a very jolly life in some ways," said Arthur. "I should like it—all the boating and climbing, and the freedom of this wild place. One feels delightfully free out here, 'Monarch of all one surveys,' in fact."

"Yes," said Lilian, "I like it immensely, and I know she does too; but she is lonely. You see she has no friends; the people her father and mother associate with are no friends to her. Come, we must go in; you look tired. How does your arm feel to-day?"

"Oh, better," said Arthur. "I must not stay here much longer, Lilian; I can't afford it. You see there are my lodgings waiting for me all this time, and I have to pay for them; I can't afford two establishments!"

"Aunt Winifred ought to have you at the Tower, and take care of you till you are quite strong and well," said Lilian. "You can't work yet; your arm isn't well enough for that, and Dr. Lane says you are not to exert yourself in the least, till you have lost this pain in your side. You can't leave this place just yet."

"I must very soon," persisted Arthur. "There is some work which I shall soon be able to do. I have my right arm to use, and I can write and draw plans, and anything of that sort. I shall be off next week."

"Well, don't talk about it yet," said Lilian; "let us enjoy ourselves as long as we can. I expect Aunt Evelyn will come again to-morrow, if it is fine. How good and kind she is! Do you think Mr. Stuart suspected anything the other day, Arthur?"

"Not the least," answered Arthur. "I parried his questions splendidly, I assure you, and he is too much of a

gentleman to worry one about one's private concerns. Whatever curiosity he might feel, he didn't show very much. I like Mr. Stuart, and that Mr. Auriol is a clever fellow. Vicar of All Saints', isn't he?"

"Yes," said Lilian; "he has only been here a little while. I haven't seen him yet, except in the street, or on the beach, when he hasn't seen *me*. I shall see him at the Stuarts' musical parties, I suppose; they say he is musical."

"Very," said Arthur, "he and I got on capitally. I shall go and see Mr. Everard before I leave Pointhaven. My fingers are burning to play the organ, Lily! I shall get the key of St. Mary's, and go and play with one hand some day soon! Did I tell you I have great hopes of being appointed organist of St. Margaret's—the church I attend generally in London?"

"No, you never told me," said Lilian. "That will be splendid, and will help you very much, won't it?"

"Yes, it's a good appointment," said Arthur. "The organist is going to resign at Christmas, and I have almost been promised that I shall succeed him. Then who knows that by-and-by I shall not give recitals on my free Saturday afternoons, and make my fortune?"

"I wish you could!" said Lilian, earnestly. "And then, when your work is done, surely we shall be happy at last! Oh, Arthur, if mother could know when it was done, how glad she would be!"

"I am glad she is safe and happy in heaven," said Arthur, sadly, "and out of all this pain and trouble. She had enough, and that last disgrace would have broken her heart. But, God helping me, I will make reparation."

Lilian looked lovingly at her brother's face, now flushed with emotion, and thought it had never looked so noble and beautiful. She pressed his arm silently, and they went indoors together.



CHAPTER XXIV.

"There is a kind of character in thy life
That to the observer doth thy history fully unfold."

—*Measure for Measure.*

ARTHUR climbed the narrow stairs that evening to have a chat with the lighthouse-keeper while he lighted his lamps, but on pushing open the door he found Hazel at work upon them instead.

"Is this your work, Hazel?" he said. "What a number of occupations you have! My sister did not see you come back from the town, and she is thinking you will be benighted."

"I have only just come back," said Hazel, rather shyly. "I do this work for father when he is out; he lets me do it because I like it. Father has gone to Marston's Ferry to see Cousin Jack."

"Wasn't Marston's Ferry a great smuggling place some years ago?" asked Arthur. "Your Cousin Jack isn't a smuggler, is he?"

"No," answered Hazel, laughing, "he is a sailor. He used to say that he would be a smuggler, when he was a little boy, and I thought I should too, because it seemed such fun to live in caves. There are great caves at Marston's Ferry. Have you seen them, sir?"

"No," said Arthur; "I must try and get over to see them before I go away from here. Tell me about them."

"They are in a great ridge of rock running out into the sea, something like these Perilpoint rocks," explained Hazel, "only the Marston Ferry rocks are not so dangerous. There are caves running underneath them, nearly all the way, and the smugglers used to live in them and hide their goods there. Marston was the head of the smugglers; he was a very brave, bold man, but very wicked, and everybody was afraid of him for miles round. He and his men used to ferry themselves across the water, from the caves to the village, when they wanted to sell their goods, and that is why the place is called Marston's Ferry."

"Were they not afraid of being caught and taken up?" asked Arthur.

"No," she answered; "the people in the village were nearly all smugglers at that time, or had friends who were smugglers, and they used to take the goods and sell them, and think nothing about it. Then at last a coastguard station was built, and the smugglers were caught and imprisoned, and there have not been any there now for a number of years. But the people are very rough and ignorant still, and will generally steal anything they can lay their hands on."

"So I should imagine," said Arthur. "I must certainly visit the smugglers' caves before I go back to London. How does one go to Marston's Ferry—by train?"

"You can go by train, or walk," said Hazel; "but the pleasantest way is by water. Will you let my father row you over some day, sir? He would be very glad to do it."

"Yes, I should like that best," said Arthur; "I'll ask him when he comes home. Hazel, I have never yet thanked you for the help you gave me when I met with my accident. If it had not been for your passing that way, I

might have died before anyone came to me. I have often thought of it, and wished to thank you for what you did for me."

"I think God sent me to help you," said Hazel, blushing, "I was a long time making up my mind whether I should go out that day for my lessons, because it was so stormy. But I did not do much for you, you know, sir."

"Yes, you did," said Arthur, smiling, "and I am grateful to you for having had me brought down here to the lighthouse, if for nothing else. If you had run the other way, and called somebody to help me, who would have taken me off into the town, I should not have been able to have my sister with me, most likely. And I have so much enjoyed myself here, since I have been able to get out, that I shall be quite sorry to leave Perilpoint."

Hazel looked up wistfully, and her eyes said that *she* would be sorry. Arthur could not help thinking what beautiful expressive eyes they were.

"I have only missed my music," he continued, "but your waves have pretty well satisfied me. I like *their* music."

"So do I," said Hazel, her eyes sparkling; "I think it is beautiful. But I wish we had an organ here, sir, so that you could play and I could listen."

Arthur laughed. "You are learning to play yourself, are you not?" he said. "What makes you love music so much? Your father and mother don't care particularly for things of that sort, do they?"

"No, sir," said Hazel, sadly, shaking her head, "at least they can do without them, and they don't know why I can't, too. But I *can't*—and it makes me miserable, sometimes."

"Why miserable?" asked Arthur; "as you can learn music now yourself, doesn't it make you happy?"

"Oh, yes," cried Hazel, eagerly; "only that when I come

home, and tell father and mother about what I have been learning, and about the beautiful music Mr. Everard plays to me, and they don't understand it, nor why it makes me happy, then I feel miserable. It is so hard to keep nice things all to yourself, and have nobody to talk to about them!"

"Poor child!" said Arthur, compassionately—with the superiority of twenty-one years over seventeen. "I know it is hard, for I have often felt it myself. But don't you talk to my sister sometimes? I am sure she would listen, and sympathise too, and be glad to help you, if you wanted help."

"Miss Lillian is very kind to me," said Hazel, earnestly, hastily brushing away the tears which had started to her eyes, "and she does help me—only, of course, I don't see her so very often, and then I get miserable, because there is no one at *home* to care about the things I care for. Do you think it is wicked of me to feel like that? Sometimes I am afraid it is, because father and mother are very, very kind to me, and let me do just what I like; but I don't seem able to help it."

"I don't think it is wicked," said Arthur, half-smiling; "I think it is natural. But who is your Cousin Jack whom you mentioned a little while ago? Isn't *he* any good to talk to?"

Hazel shook her head, with a smile. "Not about things of that sort," she said. "He is always scolding me because I care for such things. He hates my books, and is always cross when he sees them."

"Then I wouldn't have anything to say to him," said Arthur; "I think that is too bad. So you have got far beyond the barrel-organs now, Hazel?"

She laughed, with a half-wistful glance at him.

"I know what other organs are like now," she said; "Oh, sir, I have never stopped thanking you in my heart

for playing to me that day in the church. I had never heard such beautiful music before, and I can hear it still, whenever I think about it. Only I have wanted to hear it again *really*, ever since, and it teases me!"

"Mr. Everard can play better than I," said Arthur, looking into the girl's sparkling eyes with very bright ones of his own. "I thought you heard him sometimes?"

"Yes, I do, every Sunday," said Hazel; "but his organ isn't so beautiful, and neither is the one in the Town Hall, where he has recitals, so his music can't sound *quite* so grand as yours did; but he does play very beautifully. Don't you like Mr. Everard, sir?"

"Very much," answered Arthur, "what little I have seen of him. I shall go and see him before I leave Point-haven. What are you writing out for him now?"

"May I show it to you?" said Hazel; "it is beautiful. It is an anthem, and I am going to begin copying it out nicely to-night."

"I should like very much to see it," said Arthur; "I will come and look at it after tea, and I should like to see your music-books too, if you will show them to me. I want to see what you are learning. How do you manage about Mr. Everard's music? Can you play it to him when you have written it, so that he can tell whether you have done it right or not?"

"Yes, I can play things now," said Hazel, colouring; "I mean easy things, and slowly, you know, sir. I can't play them very *well* yet, but it seems to get easier every day. Do you think I shall ever be able to play beautifully?" she added, eagerly. "You see I did not begin till I was so old!"

"You are not very old, are you?" said Arthur. "Just seventeen, are you not? But Hazel, when you *can* play beautifully, and when you know a great many of the things you are so anxious to learn, what are you going to do?"

Hazel started, and the colour came and went in her face. Then she looked up at him with a wistful, imploring face.

"I don't know," she said, hesitatingly. "I know they will always make me happier, but I don't like to think about what is going to happen to me. Oh, sir!" she went on, excitedly, "you don't think I ought to give them all up, do you? Oh, please don't say that!"

"If I did think so, I should hardly have the heart to say it, when you look at me with such a face," said Arthur, half smiling, and feeling dazzled as he looked at it, more beautiful than ever, with the flush of excitement on the cheeks, and the great dark eyes glittering through tears. "But, Hazel, put away those tears. I *don't* think anything of the kind, and if you love these things so much, it must be right for you to enjoy them, if you can. I ought not to have troubled you by asking that question—it was not my business. Our future is in higher hands than our own, isn't it? and we need not worry ourselves about it. Whatever is right will come, we may be sure of that."

"Yes," said Hazel, struggling against the tears which were not inclined to be driven back, "I know—I like to think of that. But I feel so puzzled sometimes—and then I wish I were just like father and mother, and felt just as they do. I think it worries them, because I am such a queer sort of girl, and I can't help it! I have tried sometimes to forget all about music, and tried not to wonder about things I can't understand, and to think about my work all day, like mother, but I can't do it. I feel just as if I should fly right away somewhere—as if I couldn't *hold* myself any longer. And then I wish I was somebody else, and not a lighthouse girl, and people say I am proud and conceited!"

"No, you are not," said Arthur, decidedly. "But Hazel, I can't help you; I wish I could. I don't know what makes you have these queer feelings."

"I have felt much better since Mr. Everard has been teaching me, and since Miss Lilian has been so kind," said Hazel, gratefully. Then, blushing deeply, she added—"Please forgive me, sir, for talking to you like this! I have forgotten again. It is so funny to forget who you are. But Miss Lilian tells me I may forget, when I talk to her, because then I feel so much happier."

"Then you may forget with me, too," said Arthur, laughing. "I am not angry with you; I like to hear what you say, Hazel. I have a trouble too, and I think mine must be greater than yours. Lilian and I have had a great trouble for a long while, and though we are hoping to remove it in time, we can never quite forget it. Hazel, if you *must* love somebody, and yet can't honour and respect him, or even like to think of him; don't you think *that* must feel dreadful?"

"Yes," said Hazel, shuddering, "that must be worse than anything! I am so sorry." She broke off, but the face of wistful sympathy which she raised to his spoke more than words.

"That is our trouble," said Arthur, gravely, but he said no more, and Hazel could not ask.

"Mine isn't like that," she said; "mine is only a selfish trouble, all about myself. Please don't think I am very discontented, sir! It isn't that."

"I know," said Arthur, kindly; "I don't think anything of the kind. I shall come and see the music after tea, and all your books too, if your mother will let me in."

"She will do that," said Hazel, smiling; "she will be proud to see you, sir. I must run down now, and get your tea ready."

That evening was a wonderfully happy one. Arthur was so much interested in Mr. Everard's music, and in discovering Hazel's knowledge upon the subject of music in general, that the time passed far more rapidly than he was aware of; and Hazel herself was in a trance of delight.

The shyness which she at first felt when he began to turn over her books, and look at her carefully copied sheets of music, soon vanished, and gave way to a feeling of intense enjoyment in his sympathy with her work, and of wondering admiration at the ease with which he explained away difficulties, almost making her forget that they had ever existed. Lilian peeped in now and then, anxious to see that Arthur was not over-tiring himself, and was amused at the animated conversation going on, and at the intensely interested faces of the talkers. "Coming in a minute," Arthur said once or twice, but the minute proved a long one, and the evening was pretty well gone when he entered the sitting-room, saying—

"That girl is a complete puzzle to me, Lily! To think that she belongs to those Manlinsons, who, good and kind-hearted people as they are, have very little more learning or refinement than any of their neighbours, is such a curious idea that I can't take it in! Really, Lily, I had not talked to Hazel five minutes before I had entirely forgotten that we were not equals. I don't believe though——"

"What?" asked Lilian, as he stopped short.

"You will laugh if I tell you," he answered, "and tell me I am romantic and foolish. But I can't help it if I am. And if my idea doesn't prove the right one some day I shall be very much astonished."

Lilian looked inquiringly at her brother for a few seconds, and then exclaimed—

"I know what you mean, Arthur. I know what your idea is. Do you know I have had it too sometimes, only I don't know whether really to believe in it or not. It seems like it, certainly, only I don't quite see how it can be. I had been indulging in that romance one afternoon, but it was all overthrown by something Manlinson himself said. He wouldn't have said what he did, Arthur, if what you think is true."

"I don't know," said Arthur. "*He* may not know, you see; he was a sailor, and very seldom at home, and it might have happened somehow. Lilian, I can't believe anything else. It isn't only her cleverness and intelligence; it is everything about her. I don't think she has quite the same feeling for them that children generally have, and she knows it, and it troubles her. She loves them; but, if you notice, there is something not quite natural—there is no sympathy. Well, if my idea is a true one, that accounts for it all. The other day, when I was out with Manlinson, he told me that his daughter 'never had taken to their ways; she didn't seem born to them, and though she would do anything to help them, her books, and music, and things come much more natural-like to her.' Anyone can see that they do. I *should* like to know!"

"So should I," said Lilian; "but it is impossible to ask questions, and Mrs. Manlinson can be very impenetrable when she likes. I shall try to see more of Hazel after this, and help her all I can. Poor dear old Mrs. Roper will shake her head at me; she thinks Mr. Everard has ruined Hazel already."

"I don't," said Arthur, decidedly. "I am going to see him before I leave, and I shall encourage him in his good work. I am going to ask Manlinson to take you and me to Marston's Ferry in a day or two; I think we may indulge in that little dissipation before I go away. Hazel says the caves are worth seeing. Lily, I believe in my romance most firmly!"

Lilian smiled. "Don't dream of it all night," she said. "Aunt Winifred wouldn't like your peace of mind to be disturbed by lighthouse maidens!"

A little colour came into Arthur's pale face, and he laughed.

"I'm not going to scandalise Aunt Winifred or anybody else," he said, "nor forget my own self-respect either.

You can tell her that, Lily, if she makes minute inquiries as to the number of syllables Hazel and I have exchanged while I have been here. It is refreshing to find some one who loves music as that girl does, and that was the staple of our conversation. You see I have been getting music-mad from being shut up here so long."

"I know you have," said Lilian, "from the way in which your right hand is always playing music upon the tables and chairs. Arthur, we must not forget to ask Dr. Lane for his bill next time he comes; it will be much better to settle it at once, and get it off our minds. Oh, dear! how easily Aunt Winifred could settle it!"

"You should be of a more independent spirit," said Arthur. "Catch Aunt Winnie paying for my broken bones!"

"I only mean that she could do it without feeling it," said Lilian, "and to you it will be so much! Anything that delays the *end* of your work seems so provoking."

"Things may be ordered so that it won't be delayed after all," said Arthur. "But I do feel horribly impatient sometimes, to see the end; and sometimes it seems so far off that I get discouraged, and don't feel as if it were any use to go on. Pray for patience for me, Lily; one wants such a lot of patience in this world!"

"I think you have a great deal already," said Lilian, affectionately. "But I never forget you, Arthur dear, nor *him* either. Some day your reward will come, you will see."





CHAPTER XXV.

"For man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion."

—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

"MY bill?" said Dr. Lane, about a week later, when Arthur begged him to send in his account at once, that he might settle it before leaving Pointhaven; "my bill was paid this morning, and I have only run down this afternoon to satisfy myself that I may really send you off to work again in a day or two."

"Your bill paid!" exclaimed Arthur. "Who paid it? Nobody has had my leave to do anything of the kind, I assure you."

"Somebody has taken French leave then," said the doctor, "for I tell you it *is* paid, and that is all I can tell you, for X. Y. Z. may be the man in the moon, for all I know."

"For all I know too," said Arthur. "Where does he profess to live?"

"He or *she*—for I don't know that it isn't a woman—requested that I would send my bill to X. Y. Z. at the post office," said the doctor. "I received the money this morning. Pointhaven was the only postmark on the letters, and I had no notion of the handwriting. They told me at the post office that the person who called for the letter

addressed to X. Y. Z. was a woman, so wrapped up in a cloak and veil that they could not tell who she was. It isn't my business to try to find out things which people wish to conceal, so I shall acknowledge the receipt of the money to the unknown individual by-and-by, and ask no questions."

"Somebody has thought of my pocket, it seems," said Arthur, "and come to the conclusion that it isn't a very full one, which is true enough, and I am much obliged to the unknown for settling my affairs for me, but I assure you that I am quite as much surprised as you are."

"Here is the note requesting the bill," said the doctor. "Do you care to see the handwriting?"

"I don't know it," said Arthur, returning it after a few moments' vain scrutiny. "Then you really mean that the account is all settled."

"Entirely," answered Dr. Lane, "unless I make an extra charge for treating such a mysterious patient!"

Arthur smiled. "I own to appearing a little mysterious," he said, "but I should fancy you doctors come across more mysteries than most people, and soon cease to feel much curiosity about them. I tell you, truly, that I never saw that writing before in my life."

"All right," said the doctor. "I'm not of a particularly inquiring disposition myself, except with regard to my own profession. But as a good many people *are* curious, I shall keep this little matter between X. Y. Z., you, and myself, which will no doubt be more agreeable to all parties."

"Thank you," said Arthur. "Then I am off the day after to-morrow, and shan't see you again, I suppose?"

"No, I think I've about settled you," said Dr. Lane, complacently, "you had a bad time of it at first, but you have picked up wonderfully. A fine, healthy place this is! Nice tidy sort of people too, to fall amongst. Manlinson is a capital, honest fellow, and his wife is a good one for

taking care of sick people. That girl puzzles me. I hear she goes by the name of 'Duchess' in the town, and I don't wonder. She might be anything!"

A disquisition upon Hazel followed, and then Dr. Lane took his leave, and Lilian ran back to the parlour, to be puzzled in her turn about the mysterious X. Y. Z. It was her firm belief that her Aunt Winifred knew all about it, but Arthur doubted that; he did not think Miss Raymond at all likely to trouble herself, or spend her money on his behalf. Lilian, however, maintained that it was just like her to do a thing of the kind, and her opinion proved the correct one, for Miss Evelyn called next morning to wish Arthur good-bye, and on being eagerly questioned about the matter by her niece and nephew, told them that her sister had insisted on paying the bill.

"Is she coming round at last then, Aunt Evelyn?" asked Arthur, rather wistfully.

"I don't know, my dear boy," answered Miss Evelyn; "she does not show much sign of it at present, and though she has settled this matter for you, she still refuses absolutely to see you, or hold any communication with you. I tried very hard to induce her to come with me to see you this morning, but it was of no use. Never mind, my dear boy, you are doing a noble work, and some day, dear Winifred will see the matter in that light, and will bless you for it. You know her feelings and prejudices are always strong, and she is not ready to forgive those who have injured any one belonging to her. My words sound harsh, I fear, but, dear Arthur, they are true, you know; you must not blind your eyes to that."

"I don't, Aunt Evelyn," said Arthur, wearily; "I know it, and feel it only too well. But I don't think that alters my duty. I think it is a duty to others, as well as to *him*."

"Yes, you are right," said Miss Evelyn, "and you will

always have my warmest sympathy in your work, and here is a little token of it. Not much, but I know 'every little helps,' and I am so glad to feel that I can in any measure help to shorten your labours. You are a brave boy, Arthur, and will succeed in time."

"Thank you, Aunt Evelyn," said Arthur, in a low voice, "you are very good to help me. I am glad to be going back to my work, though I confess I am sorry to leave this nice old lighthouse. Lilian and I have been so happy here!"

"I am glad of it," said Miss Evelyn, kindly. "It has done Lilian good, I think, and put a little colour into her cheeks. Poor children! How I wish you need not be so much separated! It is a sad trial for both of you."

"'Men must work, and women must weep,'" said Arthur, smiling, "only don't weep now, please, Water-lily! Nor at any other time if you can help it. There is poor Hazel wandering about the rocks, looking very much inclined to follow your example. I don't know what she will do when you go back to the Tower. I'm off early to-morrow, Aunt Evelyn, so you'll see Lily back by dinner-time, I suppose."

And it was a drooping, disconsolate Lily enough, which arrived at the Tower at mid-day on Saturday. Those weeks with Arthur, in the delicious solitude of Perilpoint, had been just a little *too* pleasant, and now that they were over, and Arthur steaming away again towards London for another long absence, poor Lilian felt terribly depressed and lonely. The rambling old Tower, with only the quiet movements and voices of the two aunts and the servants about the rooms and long passages, felt ghostly and deserted—not that it was actually so lonely and quiet as the lighthouse; but no Arthur was there, and that made all the difference.

"Now that you have done your duty towards your brother, Lilian," observed Miss Raymond, as she entered

her well-warmed and lighted drawing-room after tea, and seated herself near the fire at a small table, on which stood a work basket, and a store of working materials, "I hope you will remember your duty to your aunts and guardians, and endeavour to make yourself a cheerful and pleasant companion to them. You have followed the bent of your own wishes, but I fear the weeks of idleness you have spent have not had a beneficial effect. Are you not going to occupy yourself this evening? Where is your needlework?"

"Upstairs, I think, Aunt Winifred," said Lilian, rousing herself with an effort from a day-dream, of which Arthur was the beginning, end, and centre. "I didn't feel much inclined for it to-night. Shall I read to you, while you work? We were in the middle of an interesting book when I went away."

"When I read, or listen to an interesting book, I like to finish it quickly," said Miss Winifred. "Do you think I could wait weeks to hear the end of that book, till you chose to come back and finish it? Your Aunt Evelyn and I continued our reading after you went away, and you will find the book in the library, if you wish to read the conclusion. I should advise you to begin it over again, for it is a bad plan to commence a book and leave it so long unfinished. The ideas then carried away from it are sure to be incorrect, or at least vague and unconnected. Mrs. Roper has asked us to do some work for her parish Christmas tree, and your Aunt Evelyn and I have undertaken to do what we can. I also promised your help, which I have no doubt you will give readily."

"Yes, of course," said Lilian. "I always like to help in those things. I will set to work to-morrow, and get done as much as I can by Christmas. I suppose Mrs. Roper was anxious for me to come back, to take my Sunday school class again."

"Yes, your sudden departure was very awkward," said

Miss Raymond, "but young people never think of these things. I assure you it was extremely awkward, to be continually asked where you were, and to be always obliged to give an evasive answer. You placed me in a very unpleasant position, Lilian."

"I am very sorry, aunt," said Lilian gently. And timidly she added—"Aunt Winifred, Arthur and I asked Aunt Evelyn to thank you for your kindness in paying Dr. Lane, but I want to thank you myself too. It was such a pleasant surprise to us, and Arthur was so pleased to think that you had been so kind. He said I was to be sure to give you his love and thanks."

"I want neither," said Miss Winifred, haughtily. "I am glad Arthur has the grace to show a thankful spirit, but do not talk to me about his 'love.' Very little love he has shown, in disappointing my most urgent wishes, and causing me all sorts of inconvenience and unpleasantness. Your Aunt Evelyn told me that she had made up *her* mind to pay the doctor's bill for Arthur, and of course I, having more of my own than she has, was not going to allow her to undertake *that* expense, in addition to her many charities, and therefore I paid Dr. Lane myself, in the manner you know, calling at the post office myself, for his bill one rainy evening, when my wraps disguised me. I disguised my handwriting also. It was out of no kindness to Arthur that I paid the money, but simply that I wished to save my sister the expense, and you may tell him so, when you write. Has he gone to his work to-day?"

"He will begin work again on Monday," said Lilian. "Mr. Woodward is very kind, and will give him light work at first till his arm is quite strong again. Arthur was very ill, Aunt Winifred; there was no *danger*, Dr. Lane said, but he was much more ill than he was *that* time when you nursed him and took such care of him here, before he went away."

"Arthur was then, as I thought, a dutiful nephew," said Miss Raymond, severely, "and had kindness and care shown to him accordingly. Men are all alike—dependent enough when they are ill and suffering, but let them get well and on their legs again, and much they remember of your kindness and trouble!"

"Arthur has a grateful spirit, dear Winifred," said Miss Evelyn, in a gentle tone of remonstrance. "He is, indeed, most grateful to you for what you have now done for him, and he spoke to me, with tears in his eyes, of your former care and kindness, and of the happy home you made for him in his school-days."

Miss Winifred tossed her head. "A dog is thankful if you give him a bone," she said. "I don't care for pretty speeches when I see ungrateful, disobedient actions. Words without deeds go for nothing, in my estimation. When Arthur comes to me, and tells me he is sorry for his ill conduct, and will follow my wishes for the future instead of his own, then I will listen to him, and give him fair words in reply. I am glad he has returned to London at last, as there is no knowing what absurdities he would have been dreaming of, shut up in that lighthouse with a girl like Hazel Manlinson. Very forward, I consider it, in her to have thought of having him taken down to her own home as she did. She should have gone at once to the town, and given Arthur into different hands altogether, since she must needs meddle at all."

"It is a good thing she did meddle, Aunt Winifred," said Lilian, warmly, "or Arthur might have lain there till he died from cold, and wet, and pain. And the lighthouse was so much nearer than the town; I don't wonder the poor girl ran home at once to get help rather than anywhere else. And if Arthur had been taken to the town, everybody would have heard of it at once, and there would

have been ever so much more fuss ; and I could not have gone to him."

"You may depend the girl made the most out of her romantic situation," said Miss Winifred, taking no notice of Lilian's words, "and has kept her young acquaintances well informed of every word the 'young gentleman' addressed to her. Perhaps she considers herself equal to a person of Arthur's trade. I am extremely vexed that he should have spent so many weeks in such low society."

"He saw hardly anything of Hazel until the last week or two, Aunt Winnie," said Lilian ; "and she never put herself in his way. She rather avoided us."

"A pretence, no doubt," said Miss Winifred. "That was only feigned modesty, to attract notice. My dear Lilian, I have seen a good deal more of the world than you have, and I know the ways of these people. I am glad you have an innocent, unsuspecting disposition, but you are very likely to be imposed upon ; it is a thing you must especially guard against through life, with your confiding nature."

"I wish you knew Hazel, Aunt Winifred !" said Lilian, earnestly ; "I don't think you would think so hardly of her then. And even if she *had* been forward and disagreeable, as you imagine, Arthur would have had far more self-respect than to encourage her."

"I am not at all sure of that," said her aunt ; "men are never to be trusted—not one of them. A pretty face will always turn their heads. I should not be in the least surprised to hear that Arthur had engaged himself to that girl, to repay her for rescuing him from his dangerous position."

"Aunt Winifred !" exclaimed Lilian, indignantly, "please don't say such things ! As if Arthur would do anything so foolish and wrong ! You do him great injustice—indeed you do, aunt !"

"Time will show," said Miss Raymond, sententiously. "How Arthur could be so foolish as to meet with that accident I cannot imagine. No one in his senses would have dreamed of walking along the cliff in such a storm. He has himself to blame entirely for the whole thing."

"The storm came on very suddenly, dear Winifred," said Miss Evelyn. "If you remember, the afternoon had been a quieter one than we had had for a week, and even I ventured down to the beach to see two or three sick people; the hurricane came up in a few minutes—and young men, you know, are not afraid, as we are, of a little rough weather."

"Young men are extremely foolish," said Miss Raymond, "giddy and thoughtless to the last degree. I say that Arthur *ought* to have thought of danger. I remember saying to Evelyn several times during that afternoon, that I was sure a storm of some kind was coming; and Arthur might surely have run to some lower ground for shelter; but I suppose he was dreaming and romancing as usual. It is only a wonder he was not killed."

Lilian shuddered. "Arthur is very thankful that the accident was no worse, Aunt Winifred," she said, with tears in her eyes. "We have been so happy together these weeks! Please don't spoil it all now by being angry!"

"You are a good girl, Lilian," said her aunt, "and I only hope you may always remain so, and be a comfort to me and your Aunt Evelyn. I am glad to have you back again. Go to the piano and play to me, and we will drop the subject of Arthur; it is an unpleasant one to me."

Lilian obeyed, but the music only recalled her brother's image more vividly, and she had hard work to keep the tears, which blinded her eyes as she played, from bursting forth without restraint. As she went to her room at night, her Aunt Evelyn followed her, and shut the door.

"I only wanted to tell you, dear," she said, gently, "not to trouble too much about what your Aunt Winifred says of Arthur. She cares for him far more than she will acknowledge. When I returned from Perilpoint, after my first visit to him, and told her how ill he was, the tears came into her eyes, and she said to me—'Arthur is no nephew of mine, Evelyn, but it is our duty to pray for all who are in distress of mind or body, and we will remember him in our prayers!' That was all she said, but I could see that it meant much more than she would allow—and so, dear Lillian, do not be troubled. All will come right some day—in God's own time."

And kissing her niece affectionately, Miss Evelyn went away, leaving her somewhat comforted.





CHAPTER XXVI.

"To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

—*Hamlet.*

I DECLARE, the house feels real lonesome, that it does!" said Mrs. Manlinson, as she and her daughter sat down to some needle-work one evening, a few days after the departure of their lodgers. "I wouldn't have thought it could have made me feel so queer-like, having them out of the house, but there, they be an uncommon nice young lady and gentleman, and no mistake! As I were saying to your father last night, Hazel, I'm sure it's quite an honour for we to have had the young gentleman here, and to be trusted with his secret. I'm right glad he came here, so as his sister could come and help to cheer him up. She says to me, that if so be as you had fetched somebody from the town, and he had been took off there, most like she wouldn't have been allowed to be with him, for fear of folks finding it out."

"Yes, I know," said Hazel. "Don't you feel sorry for poor Miss Lilian, mother, to be kept away from her brother as she is?"

"Ay, it's a shame!" said Mrs. Manlinson. "Seems

like, if I were her, I'd run away and stop along with him, and leave everybody else."

"Ah, but she told me she couldn't do that," said Hazel, "because she can help him much better by staying where she is with her aunts. I wonder what it is they are trying to do?"

"I've wondered many a time," said Mrs. Manlinson, "but no good ever has come of wondering yet, as far as I know. Well, it ain't no business of our'n, and nobody shan't find out who the young gentleman is through me, nor so much as know that Miss Thursfield set foot in my house while he was here. Folks is terrible cur'ous. A nice bit of work I had this morning with Kitty Jones! She's a good woman, and a kind neighbour, and I like a bit of a chat with her well enough, but you may depend on it, she come on purpose to find out all she could about Mr. Miller, as they call him."

"You didn't let her find out anything?" asked Hazel, rather alarmed.

"Not I!" answered her mother. "I know how to keep my tongue to myself when it's my duty. You've looked precious dull and forlorn-like this two or three days, Hazel, child! I suppose you do feel lonesome betimes, without any young folks about. The young lady and gentleman was very condescending, I'm sure, to take notice of you, and talk to you about your books and things—but there, you can't expect to have gentlefolk for your friends, lass, and if you'd only make a friend or two of our own sort, you wouldn't feel so lonesome. Now there's Kitty's girl, she's a real nice one, I think."

"I dare say she is, mother," said Hazel, half smiling, "but I shouldn't feel any better for having her here with me. You needn't mind about my feeling lonely, mother; it's only sometimes, you know, and nobody can help it. It was pleasant having Miss Lilian and her brother here, to

hear their voices about the house, and see them about on the rocks together, but one can't have nice things always."

But though Hazel spoke cheerfully, she did feel a great deal more "lonesome" than she would confess. *How* pleasant that little glimpse of sympathy, and of a higher friendship than could ever exist between her and Kitty's daughter, had been, she could scarcely bear to think now it was all over. She imagined herself, sometimes, equal with Arthur Thursfield in rank, with no barrier of position between them, and delighted in dreams of the friendship which might then exist between them, of the music they might enjoy together, and the talks they would have, of course supposing that he were to be as kind and sympathetic under those circumstances as in the present ones. It seemed so natural to imagine herself equal with him and Miss Lilian—much *more* natural than her own life seemed, with its round of daily distasteful tasks. It would have been easy to shirk them; her mother would never have complained, but Hazel's conscience would not allow this. She could not have enjoyed her pleasant work with Mr. Everard and her books if she had not first shared in the *unpleasant* work at home.

Two or three days afterwards Hazel was on her way from Mr. Everard's to the beach, when she was overtaken by her Cousin Jack. He did not look in a particularly good temper, and his grasp of her hand was almost savage in its warmth.

"I've been walkin' up an' down the street, waitin' for you, this long while," he said. "They told me you was with that blind gentleman, an' I thought you was never goin' to leave him. What have ye been after all the time?"

"Writing music most of the time," said Hazel, "and talking the rest. We've been talking about rocks and fossils, and I've been learning some of their names, and what rocks are made of."

"And what good does all that do you?" asked Jack. "I know as there's Perilpoint Rocks, an' Marston Rocks, an' such like, but what's the good of knowin' what they're made of? I say, is that gentleman gone that's been stayin' at the lighthouse?"

"Yes, he went away last Saturday," answered Hazel. "Why haven't you been to see us lately, Jack?"

"What did he want to stay such a time for?" asked Jack, jealously, and disregarding Hazel's question. "I don't see as the lighthouse is a place for the likes of he. I wish gentlefolks would keep to themselves, an' not come forcing themselves where they ain't wanted."

"Mr. Miller didn't force himself anywhere," said Hazel, indignantly. "Father took him to the lighthouse because he was very ill, and it was the nearest place; and he only stayed till he was well enough to go back to his work. Father and mother were very pleased to have him there, and be able to help him, and I don't see why you need be angry, Jack."

"An' you were pleased too," said Jack, gruffly; "of course I know you was. Don't go to pretend you never spoke to the gentleman, Hazel!"

"I am not pretending anything of the kind," said Hazel, drawing herself up proudly. "I did speak to him several times, and I'm not ashamed of it. Why do you interfere with me, Jack? It doesn't matter to you whom I speak to."

"Yes, it does," said Jack. "But there, don't look at me like that, lass! I didn't mean to make you angry. Only if that Mr. Miller, or any other fine gentleman, comes an' makes you fall in love with him, it'll be the worse for him!"

"What do you mean?" asked Hazel, thinking Jack's senses were deserting him. "Why do you say such things, Jack? As if any young gentleman would fall in love with

a lighthouse-keeper's daughter! I wish you would let me alone, and not be so silly."

"I'm not goin' to let you alone till you've heard what I've got to say," said Jack, in a determined tone. "If I says things you don't like it's only because I love you, Hazel, an' I can't abear to think of any one takin' you from me. You're seventeen now, Hazel, an' you ought to be able to see when a fellow cares for you. I've loved you this long while, an' now I want you to say to me, 'I'll be your wife, Jack.'"

Hazel started, and drew back from him.

"I can't be your wife, Jack!" she exclaimed. "You've always been my brother. I care for you because we used to play together, and you've always been good to me, but I couldn't marry you!"

"I know I ain't fit for you," said Jack, humbly. "I know I'm a plain, rough fellow, an' have just been as cross to you as can be—an' you're as beautiful an' clever as any lady in the land. But if you'd marry me, Hazel, I'd be good to you, that I would, an' you should do just as you liked. An' I wouldn't find fault with you for your readin' an' musickin'—I wouldn't really. Say yes, lass, an' make it up! Your father an' mother would be main pleased, for they've as good as told me so. An' I'm gettin' on first rate, an' have saved a good bit of money for the housekeepin'."

"Dear Jack, I'm so sorry!" said Hazel, looking up into her cousin's rough, though manly and straightforward face, with eyes full of tears. "I never thought you'd want to marry me. You've often told me you loved me, but I never thought about this, because you're my cousin, and you've been a sort of brother to me. Please forget all about me, Jack, and find up a nice girl somewhere else, who would make you a much better wife than I should. I know you wouldn't like me for a wife very long, for you've so often been cross with me lately."

"I shouldn't be if you were my wife," said Jack, pleadingly. "Come, Hazel, I've thought upon it for so long. Tell me you'll have me by-an'-by, in a year's time, we'll say, an' I'll wait for you, an' never say a word more about it till then."

"It wouldn't be any use," said Hazel, decisively. "I should never like to be your wife. We shouldn't suit each other a bit, and we shouldn't be happy. I don't know much about marrying, for I haven't thought about it, but I know I couldn't marry anybody who didn't care for the things I like, and would be angry with me for caring for them. And you wouldn't like it, really, either. I shouldn't make you a bit of a good wife—not the sort you would want—and then we should quarrel, and be miserable."

"No, we shouldn't," said Jack, perversely. "Who will ye marry then, lass? Have you seen anybody you fancy afore me?"

"I don't know if I shall ever marry at all," answered Hazel, shaking her head. "I don't think it's very likely. I don't know whom I could care for. Anyway, I couldn't marry *you*, Jack, so please never ask me any more. I wish you had never thought about it, for now I have made you unhappy!"

Jack turned away, and brushed his sleeve across his eyes.

"All right, lass," he said. "You couldn't help it. I was a fool for thinkin' you could care for such as me. I know you're a sight above me—but there—I've always worshipped the ground you've trod on since you was that high!"

"I'm very sorry!" repeated Hazel, mournfully. Then, heroically doing violence to her own feelings, in order to console Jack's wounded ones, she added, "Kiss me, Jack, and forgive me. I never meant to make you love me, and I hope you'll soon forget you ever did."

"I shan't," said Jack, with a half sob, as he stooped to

give the kiss, which his cousin permitted. "I don't know as there's anythin' to forgive—only—Hazel, tell me! You ain't settin' up to marry a fine gentleman some day—like—like that one you've had along with ye all this while?"

"No," exclaimed Hazel, almost bursting into tears. "I told you I didn't think about marrying! I'm only just seventeen, Jack; it isn't time for me to want to get married yet for a long while. I wish you wouldn't tease me about it!"

"Don't cry," said Jack, imploringly. "I don't want to vex ye, only I thought if you gave me up for thinkin' of such as he, 'twould drive me pretty nigh mad. There—I won't tease you again—poor little thing! But I do wish you had been born a bit more like other folks, that I do." And Jack heaved a profound sigh.

"Will you come home with me and see father and mother?" asked Hazel. "They'll be glad to see you, Jack."

"No, not to-night. I don't want to see nobody," answered Jack, in a muffled voice. "I am goin' right back to Marston's Ferry. God bless you, Hazel. You've made me a better fellow than I might have been, and you'll be my good angel still, though you won't have nothin' else to say to me. Maybe I'll feel a bit better by-an'-by, but I ain't just fit for bein' good company this minute, so I'll go home."

And with a farewell wring of Hazel's hand, and a mournfully tender look in his honest grey eyes, Jack turned away. Hazel ran down to her boat with quick steps, and jumping in, pushed herself off, with one or two vigorous strokes. Then letting her oars fall, she burst into a passionate flood of tears. It was so good of Jack to love her, but so hopeless! She could not love him in return, and she knew that no time of waiting would alter her feelings. The idea of being his wife made her shudder! But his love for her, she murmured to herself, ought not to have made him say

what he had said about Mr. Miller. It was hard to forgive that, and she felt glad that he had refused to go home with her. She did not want to see him again just now, while those words of his rankled in her mind. "I wish I could be one thing or another!" she said to herself passionately. "It is so hard to *be* what I am, and *feel* what I am not! I wish Miss Lilian was at the lighthouse, and I could go and talk to her! I suppose I ought to tell father and mother about Jack; I hope they won't be vexed. They can't want me to be married yet, I think; father always says he couldn't do without his little daughter." And with that reflection Hazel dried her eyes at last, and took up her oars again and made for home.

Manlinson *was* disappointed at his daughter's decided refusal of her cousin Jack, though he did not say much about it. He would not have allowed her to be married for some time, he said, but knowing that girls mostly did look forward to getting married some day, he had always thought that Jack would make her a right good husband; and it wouldn't have seemed so bad to lose her, when the time came, if she could have made up her mind to have her cousin. However, as Hazel declared that her mind was made up, and could never alter, he grew reconciled after a while to the disappointment, and thought that, after all, there would be time enough for the child to think of such things as marrying in three or four years' time. Mrs. Manlinson said very little on the subject. She had never particularly set her heart on the marriage, she said, for she had seen well enough that Hazel wasn't likely to fancy it herself; and her child should never be forced into marrying anybody. And as for Jack, he would soon pick up some one else—she didn't doubt that. He was made of tough stuff, and wasn't likely to break his heart. And after that night, at Hazel's earnest request, the subject was dropped.

Jack did not visit his relations for some time; he was

trying hard, poor fellow, to forget his disappointment by extra application to his work. He knew his case was hopeless, and resolved not to trouble Hazel with his suit any more, or to see her again, till his wounded feelings were in some degree recovered.

"I was a fool to think of it," he said to himself, by way of consolation. "She's as far above me as a born lady could be, but seemed like I must try. She asked me to forgive her, poor little lass! I'm sure there ain't nothin' to forgive, for she never tried to make me love her, an' then played me false—I'll say that for her. She were always as true an' good as gold, an' I'm sorry I bothered her about the young gentleman. But I was anxious-like to know what she'd say to me, an' I was jealous. I know I was; and I wish I'd held my tongue. Ah, well! maybe there's more truth in what she said, about us not *suiting*, than I sees just at this minute. Anyway, it's over, an' I've got my answer, an' I must make the best of it. But it'll be hard yet awhile."





CHAPTER XXVII.

'Heaven bless thee !

Thou hast the sweetest face that ever I looked on.'

—*Henry VIII.*

SO you are back at last, Lilian!" exclaimed Katie Stuart, happening to call with her mother at St. Philip's vicarage, one December afternoon, when Lilian and her two aunts were busily discussing Christmas tree preparations with Mrs. Roper. "And here is Mrs. Roper, giving you your hands full already! What pretty little red cloaks! Did you make them?"

"Lilian is a clever workwoman, Katie," said Mrs. Roper, whose pleasant face beamed as usual with good humour; "and I am glad to have her back again—very! We have a good deal of work to get through by Christmas time, and she is as industrious as a bee—*too* industrious, I have just been telling her, for I fear she gives me too much of her time."

"I suppose she hasn't very much else to do," said Katie; "have you, Lilian? Where have you been all this while? Have you enjoyed yourself?"

"Very much, indeed," answered Lilian, with a slight blush. "Katie, have you had that musical party yet, that you were talking of before I went away?"

"No," answered Katie, "we put it off till you came back, for we want you to come and help us. Connie and I were intending to come and ask you to-morrow. Mamma has fixed it for next Wednesday. Can you come then?"

"Oh yes," said Lilian, "I should like to come very much! Is Mr. Everard really going to play for you?"

"Really and truly," said Katie. "I think he is delighted at the idea. I believe he is quite fond of company, now he has once begun to indulge in it."

"Once begun, my dear!" said Mrs. Roper. "Poor Mr. Everard has seen plenty of company in his day. When he was young and rich he was a great favourite in company, I believe, and much sought after. He has never told me so, but I was talking with him one day, and that is what I gathered. Poor fellow! I fear he has met with sad misfortunes."

"Then you don't believe in the report of *extravagance*, etc.?" said Mrs. Stuart.

"I used to do so, I confess, like other people," answered Mrs. Roper; "but I do not like to believe ill of people, and since I have seen more of Mr. Everard, I have felt quite sorry that I ever judged him harshly. The poor dear man is to be pitied, I think. What do you think of our new clerical neighbour, Miss Raymond?"

"Mr. Auriol is coming to our party," said Katie, aside to Lilian. "Papa has taken a great fancy to him. Have you met him yet?"

"No," answered Lilian; "only that day on the beach with you, don't you remember? And I have seen him once or twice in the town at a distance. Do you like him?"

"I'm afraid of him," said Katie. "He doesn't know how to talk to young ladies in the least. With papa he gets on all right, but if I try to enter into conversation with him, he is as stupid as possible! *You* shall try on Wednesday; perhaps you will succeed better"

Lilian, however, felt no special desire to face the Senior Wrangler in close combat; and though Katie did her best, on the following Wednesday evening, to give her the opportunity of trying to draw out his conversational powers, her mischievous scheme failed, for Mr. Auriol devoted himself pertinaciously to his masculine acquaintances, and neglected the "fair sex," as Katie declared, shamefully! The only time that he roused himself to action was, when Lilian rose from the piano, after singing a favourite song of Arthur's, and found him, to her surprise, decidedly nearer to her than he had been at the commencement of her performance, and when he thanked her quite gratefully, and praised her singing, and even found courage to tell her that the song was a very favourite one of his own. That was all, and he retreated to his corner again, and talked to Mr. Everard for the rest of the evening. Lilian liked him for his kindness and attention to the blind guest, and rejoiced in his evident appreciation of her master's genius. She was glad to think that Mr. Everard might possibly find a kind and sympathising friend in the new young vicar of All Saints', and she looked over more than once to the corner where the two sat, chatting earnestly together. Mr. Auriol's face was certainly not handsome, but Lilian did not at all agree with Katie's opinion that it was plain and uninteresting. It was capable of lighting up sometimes, in a manner which almost made it appear beautiful, and was at all times, to her mind, clever and interesting. And the fact that it was the face of a Senior Wrangler was enough; for Lilian possessed a large bump of reverence, and could not regard such a celebrity with anything *but* feelings of interest—and, perhaps, if the truth were confessed, of humble admiration. As for Mr. Auriol, he at least proved himself that night to be a man of observation, and went home with two ideas very firmly fixed in his mind. One was, that Lilian Thursfield, with

her soft golden curls and delicate complexion, and in her white dress, with its pale green trimmings, set off by a rich background of dark crimson sofa-cushions, made the prettiest picture he had ever seen, and produced the most artistic effect in the whole of the prettily decorated drawing-room. And, secondly, that her voice was certainly the sweetest he had ever had the pleasure of hearing, and much to be preferred to that of another young lady singer, who had spent three years in Italy for the purpose of having *her* voice trained by a distinguished vocal genius. Which opinion must have been true, for as Mr. Auriol had never been introduced to Miss Thursfield until that evening, and had addressed to her, at different times during that evening, but two sentences, he could not be accused of partiality.

Christmas and New Year came and went, and the first early snowdrops were just peeping out of their green cradles, when Constance Stuart was married. Her's was a pretty wedding, and she looked a very happy bride, as she drove off with her husband, in the afternoon, to the station, *en route* for a little quiet watering-place in Devonshire, where the honeymoon was to be spent. It was a few days after the wedding, and the first strangeness and loneliness felt by all at the Rectory, after Constance's departure, was beginning to soften a little, when Mr. Stuart said to his wife one day at dinner—

"Do you remember my old college chum, young Ravenstone of Ravenstone, my dear, whom you met at my rooms at Oxford one day before our marriage?"

"Ravenstone?" said Mrs. Stuart, ponderingly. "Why, yes, to be sure I do! A fine-looking young fellow, just going out to some good position in the Indian Civil Service, was he not? Oh, I remember that evening very well, and thinking that Sir Reginald Ravenstone was quite the nicest of your 'chums,' though he was a little reserved and proud. Have you heard anything of him?"

"Yes, he is living at Ravenstone," said Mr. Stuart. "You remember the park through which we drove one day last summer, when we were staying with your Aunt Frances? That is the Ravenstone property; it is not very extensive, but exceedingly pretty, and Ravenstone has settled down there at last."

"Who told you? Has he been there long?" asked Mrs. Stuart.

"General Lawrence told me this morning," answered her husband. "He knew something of Sir Reginald in India, and heard of his arrival a fortnight ago. I shall go over and see him in a few days. By taking the early train I shall just manage it, now the days are lengthening. I am glad to hear of the poor fellow again, for he never wrote after that first letter, in which he told me of his happy marriage with a missionary's beautiful daughter. I have often thought that he or his wife must have died since, from my never hearing again."

"Go and see him by all means," said Mrs. Stuart. "His wife is dead, I suppose? Ravenstone is a quiet little place for a man to settle down in after knocking about for years in India."

"I dare say he will enjoy it," said Mr. Stuart. "He was a man who liked a quiet life. And Ravenstone is as pretty a country place as anyone need wish to possess; the whole neighbourhood is so charming."

"Aunt Frances drove me all through the park and village when I stayed with her," said Katie. "She said she always made a point of taking her friends to Ravenstone. I hope Sir Reginald has a large family, papa, for it would be a shame for a man to live in that beautiful place all by himself!"

"He has no family at all," said Mr. Stuart; "so General Lawrence told me. And he has lost his wife also. I was in a hurry, or I might perhaps have heard particulars.

However, I don't know that the General could have told me much, after all, for I remember he said that it was during the first year after Ravenstone's marriage that he saw a good deal of him ; after that his regiment changed quarters."

"I wish he had some children," said Katie, "for then we might see something of them when we stay at Fairdale with Aunt Frances, and perhaps have had an invitation to Ravenstone. A solitary widower will be sure to shut himself up, and be a sort of hermit."

"What do you know of 'solitary widowers?'" asked Mr. Stuart, laughing. "We won't judge Sir Reginald till we see him, Katie, for he may be an exception to your rule. If I have an hour to spare, mamma, on my way to Ravenstone, I shall get out at Stonecroft, and look in on Constance. They return from Devonshire the day after to-morrow, don't they? Don't forget old Betty Miles, this afternoon, Katie; she will be disappointed if she loses her afternoon's reading, now Connie is gone."

"I won't forget her, papa," said Katie. "I am not going to neglect one of Constance's duties; I have a list of them, written out on pink paper, fastened on to my looking-glass upstairs, and by-and-by you will see that people like me just as well as they liked Connie. I am envious of her popularity!"

"And don't forget to work for a higher motive too," said Mr. Stuart, kissing his daughter's sparkling face, as he rose from the table. "Popularity is very pleasant, but God's approval is best. Seek that, and you will soon like the duties for their own sake, as your sister did."





CHAPTER XXVIII.

"The report of her is extended more than can be thought to begin from such a cottage."

— *Winter's Tale.*

SIR REGINALD RAVENSTONE of Ravenstone sat alone in his library—a large well-furnished room, lined with heavy oaken book-shelves, stocked with volumes of all sizes, and with bindings old and new. Glass doors at one end of the room opened out to the smooth green lawn, bordered on each side with flower-beds, and sloping away at a little distance from the house to a broad stream, fringed with weeping willows, beyond which lay the park, sunny and bright, on this frosty February day—the yellow sunlight glinting through the oak branches in the deep glades. But very little of the outside sunshine was reflected in the face of the master of Ravenstone, as he sat by his lonely fireside, his eyes bent upon a portrait which he held in his hand—the portrait of a young and lovely lady, holding in her arms a baby-girl, upon whom her soft brown eyes rested with a wistfully tender expression. Sir Reginald's was a fine noble face, but it bore an expression of habitual melancholy; the keen grey eyes, which looked as if they had once been bright and full of life, had lost their lustre, and their searching gaze was now a mournful and hopeless one. The hair

which waved over his high forehead was grey, and yet he could not be an old, or even elderly, man. People took him for a good many years older than he really was, for his age was only forty-six, and he was considered ten years older at the very least. His face was a good deal bronzed from his Indian life, and furrowed too, but it was a proud reserved face, which said—"I have sorrow, but I want no sympathy. Leave me and my sorrow alone, and when I wish for sympathy I will ask for it." At least that was how people read it, and so they held rather aloof from Sir Reginald of Ravenstone, and did not know his heart sometimes craved for a little of the sympathy which his face seemed to repel, and that it only wanted some loving heart to break through the reserve which he could not break through himself.

Sir Reginald had only been a month in his own home, and his servants told the neighbours they thought it very doubtful whether he would stay long in it. He was so restless, always wandering up and down the house or grounds, except when he sat over his fire in gloomy solitude, which his domestics feared to interrupt. They did not know what to make of him, but they fancied he could not be quite right in his mind, and that Ravenstone Park could not content such a restless spirit long. And so, the neighbouring gentry, having heard these reports, had made up their minds that Sir Reginald was a person rather to be avoided, and some of them never called on him at all, while others went away frightened at his melancholy face and haughty reserve of manner, and resolved not to cultivate very much intimacy with the new master of Ravenstone.

Sir Reginald's eyes were still fixed upon the young lady's picture, when there came a knock at the door, and he had but just laid the portrait aside, and folded his arms, with a proud touch-me-not air, when his footman entered and handed him a card, on which he read the name of the

Reverend Henry Stuart. "Show him in," was all he said, but the sight of that name—carrying him back suddenly to his happy college days, and to the first year or two of his married life, reminding him vividly of the joyous letter he had written to his friend, telling him of his marriage—had given him a shock of mingled surprise, pain, and pleasure, which was none the less strong because it was not outwardly visible. He put his hand to his forehead and groaned, as the footman left the room ; but when the latter returned, ushering in Mr. Stuart, the habitual look of immovable, calm melancholy had returned to his face, and he received his guest with what seemed to the warm-hearted clergyman cold and formal politeness. However, Mr. Stuart reflected that it was nearly twenty years since he had last heard from his old friend, and still longer since he had last seen him, and that the wide separation between them during all these years might well account for the reserve with which he now greeted him. The change in Sir Reginald's appearance struck him painfully. The grey head and stooping shoulders, and the listless face full of proud sorrow, were so different to the brown, wavy locks, erect form, and energetic expression of the young Ravenstone who had gone out to India, full of life and spirits, years ago. However, he drew his own chair to the fire cheerfully, and after a short time Sir Reginald's reserve began to wear off, and it was not long before the two old friends were engaged in earnest conversation.

"This is her portrait," said Sir Reginald at last, taking from a table drawer at his side the picture at which he had been so earnestly gazing before Mr. Stuart's call, and handing it to him with a half hesitating gesture. "This is as she was when I lost her—when I was forced to send her and our child home to England, to save, as I thought, their lives ; and when, instead of being saved, they were both lost to me for ever, in one dreadful moment !"

He shuddered, but watched his friend's face eagerly, as he looked at the picture.

"She was beautiful, was she not?" he said, in a low, passionate tone, "and the little girl was known all round as the loveliest English child in the country. Too beautiful, were they not, to be the ocean's prey—to be drawn down together into the dark gulf of death! It made me mad, Stuart—at least I think so. Some people think I am mad still, I believe, but I am not. I am only tired of life. I have been tired of it for years; but I have worked on—it was the best thing to do—till my health has failed. And now I have come back to my own home to drag out the rest of this weary existence."

"So you think Ravenstone is the best place for you?" asked Mr. Stuart, laying his hand affectionately on his friend's arm. "Is it not too lonely a home for you, after your busy life in India? Would it not be better for you to live where you might have more companions?"

"No," said Sir Reginald, hastily, "I want no companions. I shall be glad to see *you*, if you will come over at any time you like; you do me good, but companions drive me wild—trying politely to find out my private affairs, and forcing their sympathy upon me. What good can they do me? They cannot give me back my wife and child."

"It is a lovely little child," said Mr. Stuart, giving back the portrait. "How old was she when—when it happened?"

"Two years and a-half old," said Sir Reginald, despairingly. "It happened off the Sussex coast; Stonybeach was the name of the place, I think. But I am wearying you with my affairs," he added, with a harsh laugh. "Tell me of yours. Have you been long at Pointhaven?"

"Twelve years," answered Mr. Stuart, "and I have no wish to leave the place. I have a very comfortable living, and a congregation in whom I am much interested. You

must come and see us some day before long; my wife remembers you very well, and will give you a warm welcome. Pointhaven is a charming place, and we have a good many visitors in the summer; tourists and artists often find their way to us. Perilpoint Lighthouse is rather a celebrated one; it stands at the edge of a very dangerous, though picturesque range of rocks, which we are rather proud of."

"I have heard of them," said Sir Reginald. "Is there not a girl at that lighthouse who is rather a celebrity in your neighbourhood? I don't hear much gossip, but I have rather a fancy for sailors, and I came across one the other day who rambled on for about an hour about the lighthouse and some strange girl, who appears to make a sensation."

"What? Hazel Manlinson?" said Mr. Stuart, with a smile. "Fancy *your* hearing of her! Well, I don't know about her being a 'celebrity,' exactly, but——"

"What name, did you say?" interrupted Sir Reginald, eagerly.

"Manlinson—Hazel, or more properly, *Hazelel* Manlinson," replied his friend. "She is certainly an extraordinary girl for her position in life. I don't myself know quite what to think of her. Why, Ravenstone, what is the matter?"

Sir Reginald's face at this moment had grown suddenly white, and he was clutching his chair for support.

"Hazelel was my daughter's name," he said, drawing his breath heavily. "I never heard of more than one Hazel in the world till now. Never mind—I shall be better presently; I am not so strong as I used to be, and a little thing upsets me. How old is this girl?"

"About seventeen, I believe," said Mr. Stuart. "Strange that her name should be the same as your daughter's—such an uncommon one as it is! Her father and mother are honest, trustworthy sort of people, but

nobody can understand the girl. She is above her class in appearance, mind, and manner, and is a constant topic of town gossip, because she has been taken up by a blind organist, who is teaching her music and other things, and employing her as his amanuensis. However, I did not know her fame had reached this remote village !”

“The sailor who mentioned her to me was a Pointhaven man,” said Sir Reginald, dreamily, his brow wrinkling, and his thoughts evidently much disturbed. “This world is a strange place ; one comes upon such anomalies sometimes. But where her parents got that name from, I can’t imagine.”

“A Bible name—or part of one,” said Mr. Stuart, thoughtfully. “Poor people often choose Bible names for their children, but I have often wondered at the Manlinsons choosing that one, which only occurs once, to my knowledge, and in a part they are not likely to have studied. Well, Ravenstone, I must be off, or I shall lose my train.”

“Must you go ?” said Sir Reginald. “Can’t you stay and dine with me ? I should be glad of your company, and you can have a bed if you will remain for the night.”

“I am afraid I must not stay, thank you,” said Mr. Stuart. “I promised to return home to-night, without fail. But I will come over again before long—or perhaps you will come and see me first ? This is a charming place of yours, especially in the summer.”

“Yes, it is very pretty,” said Sir Reginald, in a melancholy tone ; “but what is the good of a place like this to a solitary man like me ? Its beauties are wasted. But it is quiet, and out of the way of passers-by, and suits me for that reason. Stuart, I have not forgotten you all these years, in spite of my silence. Those first two or three years after my marriage were spent in a dream of happiness, in which I believe I neglected my old friends ; and afterwards I did not care to write. I *could* not for a while, and then I

thought it would be of little use, after such a long silence, to begin a correspondence again. I thought it might only trouble you, and I was not sure where you were. Life was so dreary—so horribly dreary—but to have laid bare my trouble in writing would have tortured me. I am proud, I know, and what I have suffered I have preferred to keep to myself. I don't know what has made me talk to *you* as I have done, but the sight of an old face has done me good, I think. You were always a good fellow, Stuart, and I remember of old that you had a power over my pride and reserve which no others had. I am grateful to you for remembering me."

"I have never forgotten you," said Mr. Stuart, warmly, "and if I can in any way help, through God's blessing, to cheer the desolate path to which He has appointed you, believe me, it will give me great happiness. All trials come from Him, Reginald—don't forget that."

Sir Reginald wrung his friend's hand, and as he closed the door upon him, turned away with a groan. He knew he *had* forgotten it—forgotten it for years. He had not felt that he wished to remember it. He had nursed his bitter grief, and refused to share it with any one, and especially with Him from whose hand it came. He went back to his library, shut and locked the door, and paced up and down the room for hours. His last thought at night was, as his chief thought had been all the evening, of that namesake of his own child's who lived at Perilpoint Light-house. He could not dismiss her from his mind, and even at night her imagined image visited him in his dreams. Hazel, sleeping in her lonely chamber, lulled to rest by the ever-plashing waves beneath, little thought that she was the subject of a lonely man's dreams that night—and that man Sir Reginald Ravenstone of Ravenstone.



CHAPTER XXIX.

"Our Perdita is found."

—*Winter's Tale.*

IT was three or four days after Mr. Stuart's visit to Ravenstone, that Hazel, crossing the bay from Perilpoint one afternoon, observed a motionless figure on the beach—the figure of a tall man, standing with folded arms, looking out fixedly over the water, evidently watching her approach. As her boat drew nearer, he moved away a few steps, and began to pace slowly up and down, but still keeping his face turned towards her, so that as she landed, their eyes met, and she had a good view of the stranger—of his proud, scornful face, with its deep, melancholy grey eyes, and his tall, stooping form, and dignified, almost haughty bearing.

She quickly withdrew her eyes, for he was looking straight into them, with such a fixed, searching expression in his own, that she wondered who he was, and why he looked at her so strangely. She felt his eyes still upon her, while she moored her boat, and was relieved when he turned away and walked on. However, he had only gone a few steps, when he turned back again, and said to her—

"Is that Perilpoint Lighthouse out yonder?"

"Yes, sir," said Hazel, modestly, venturing another look into the keen grey eyes, which rather fascinated her.

"Who lives there?" he asked.

Something in his deep, sonorous voice startled her, and she answered, rather timidly—

"Father and mother and I live there. Father's name is Manlinson."

"And yours?" he said.

"Hazel Manlinson," she answered. "Father has been the lighthouse-keeper a good many years."

"I should like to see the lighthouse," said the stranger. "Is your father at home to-day?"

"No, sir, he is out fishing," said Hazel. "He will not be home till to-morrow morning."

"Perhaps I shall come and see him to-morrow," said the strange gentleman. "How old are you, my child?" he added, rather abruptly.

"Seventeen and a-half, sir," replied Hazel, feeling quite nervous under his piercing gaze.

He drew a long breath, wished her good afternoon suddenly, and turned away. Looking back after him, when she had gone some way across the beach, she saw him, still looking out over the bay, towards the lighthouse. She wondered why he stood there so long, and who he could be, and what it was in his voice that had made a queer feeling run over her. He was gone on her return home an hour later, but she could not forget him; that pale, melancholy face, and those keen but sad grey eyes, haunted her all the evening. They reminded her of something, but she could not tell what. If the idea dawned upon her, it was quickly gone again, before she could grasp it; but it seemed to be connected somehow with Tom Shipwell. At any rate, it brought him again to her mind, and she dreamt confused dreams of him and the stranger all night.

Sir Reginald Ravenstone paced the beach like a disturbed spirit for an hour after the lighthouse girl had left him, and then found his way to St. Mary's Vicarage, where

his sudden and much-changed appearance startled and shocked Mrs. Stuart.

"My husband is out," she said, when she had warmly welcomed him, and wheeled an easy-chair for him nearer to the fire, "but if you will stay and join our early tea, he will be in by that time. He would be sorry to miss you."

"I should like to see him," said Sir Reginald. "If I shall not be in your way, I shall be glad to stay. I could not rest at Ravenstone after hearing of that lighthouse girl. She has haunted me ever since, and to-day I came over to ask your husband to go to Perilpoint with me that I might see her. However, I have seen her already on the beach, and spoken with her, and I will now wait until to-morrow before going, when her father will be at home."

"Then you must spend the night with us," said Mrs. Stuart. "Please do not refuse. It will give us great pleasure, and my husband will then be ready to accompany you at any hour you like to-morrow. You say you have seen the girl, Sir Reginald? You do not think——"

"Look," said Sir Reginald, drawing from one of his pockets the portrait of his wife and child. "This is my baby daughter, Hazel, whom I lost fifteen years ago. I never saw her after she was two years and two months old, so how can I tell what she would be like at seventeen and a-half? But if any girl in the world is like what I have imagined my little Hazel to be now, it is Hazelel Manlinson, the lighthouse-keeper's daughter."

Sir Reginald's lips quivered as he spoke, and his grey eyes fired with eagerness.

"Do you know anything of those people?" he said, impetuously. "Are they honest people, whose word can be trusted? If I go to them, and question them minutely about their daughter, will they tell me the truth? Have you ever heard anything said about her parentage?"

"I know but little of them myself," answered Mrs. Stuart, full of amazement. "They are not in our parish. I believe, however, that they both bear an excellent character; and there has never been anything against the daughter, except that she indulges in pursuits unsuitable to her station, and is said to be proud and wilful. She is beautiful, as you have seen, and girls of her own class are jealous of her, no doubt. We have never heard a word which could lead us to suppose that there was any secret connected with her birth. It is true she is exceedingly unlike her parents, both in appearance and in refinement of mind."

"So your husband told me," said Sir Reginald, playing with his watch-chain, "and so, as to the *appearance*, I have already seen for myself. You are no doubt thinking me wild and romantic, Mrs. Stuart, but look at the portrait again. Does not the likeness strike you, between—not the child, for children alter so much—but the *mother* and Hazalel Manlinson?"

Mrs. Stuart again examined the picture. She had scarcely noticed the mother before; it was the beautiful little child which had attracted her chief attention. But she had seen Hazel very seldom, and hesitated.

"I know Hazel Manlinson so little," she said. "I have never spoken to her in my life. But my daughter Katie has seen her more often than I have, and she would be a better judge. I dare not tell you to hope, Sir Reginald, for with all the girl's peculiarities no one has ever heard a syllable of her actually belonging to a higher station than her present one. Would that it might be so for your sake!"

Sir Reginald sighed heavily, and relapsed into silence. Mrs. Stuart left him, to make arrangements for his night's accommodation, and as soon as she had left the room, he got up from his chair, and paced restlessly up and down, muttering to himself—

"Those great dark eyes, and that sweet expressive mouth, and the voice too—they are all so like hers. That proud curve of the upper lip is not like her, but that does not spoil the child's beauty—and she is very beautiful! Hazel Ravenstone could not have been more so. How shall I wait till to-morrow? But I would rather see the whole family at once; it will be more fair. What if this wild idea has no foundation after all? Yet that voice—surely it cannot deceive me!"

Sir Reginald had little rest that night; it seemed the longest he had ever spent, and he looked worn out and jaded in the morning. But he would hear of no delay in the expedition to Perilpoint; the sooner it was over the better, he said, and he and Mr. Stuart started soon after breakfast—the former feeling not much less nervous than his friend.

"Who's that comin' along the rocks, Hazel?" said Mrs. Manlinson, about an hour later that same morning, as she entered the kitchen with an armful of clothes which she had been drying. "Here's two gentlemen comin' down from the cliff. Can you see who they be?"

Hazel ran to the door and looked out.

"One of them is Mr. Stuart, mother," she said, "and the other is a strange gentleman—the one who was waiting about on the beach yesterday, and spoke to me. I can't think who he is. Why, mother, I quite forgot to tell you that he said he was coming here to-day, to see the lighthouse, when father was at home."

"Well, he won't come in here, I suppose," said Mrs. Manlinson, surveying the pile of linen dubiously. "The place is in a pretty litter, but the parlour's tidy, ain't it; Just run and see, child, for maybe the gentlemen will like to rest a bit, and have a glass of my home-made wine, after their walk, and I'd like 'em to see a room that ain't all choked up with dust."

"I've put the parlour all straight and nice, mother," said

Hazel. "I'll call father," and she ran to a back store-room, where Manlinson was busy packing his fish in fresh baskets, ready for the market.

A few minutes more found both the gentlemen seated in the little front parlour, where Hazel, still fascinated by the stranger's melancholy eyes, and deep, ringing voice, watched him furtively over her mother's shoulder.

"That is your daughter?" said Sir Reginald, turning his piercing gaze upon her suddenly, while he addressed her mother.

"Yes, sir," answered Mrs. Manlinson, in an almost defiant tone; "our Hazel—our only one, sir."

"You chose an uncommon name for her," observed Sir Reginald. "Where did you get such a name from?"

"It's in the Bible, sir," said Manlinson. "I didn't have no hand in the choosing of it, for I were away at sea when the child were born, and never set eyes on her till she were just upon three year old. It were a fancy of my wife's to give her the name, I suppose, but it don't come much aniss, I think, sir?"

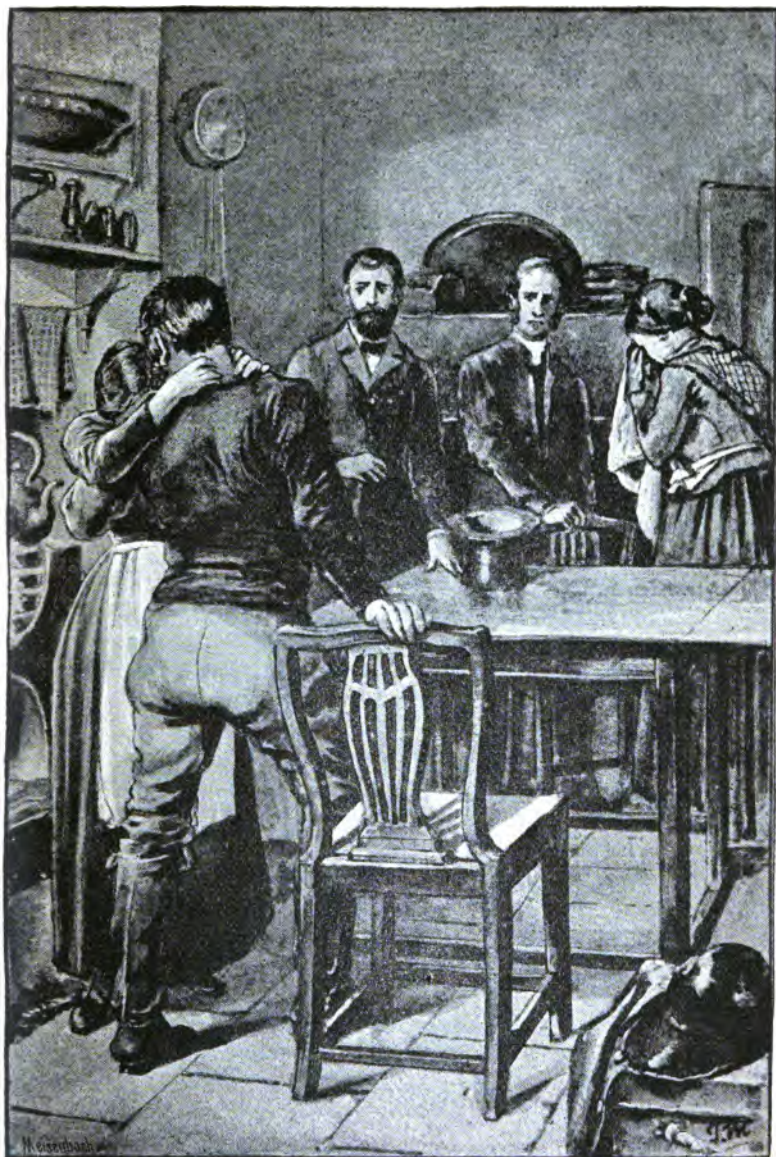
"Not at all," said Sir Reginald, gravely, as Manlinson pinched his daughter's cheek. "You have been a sailor then?"

"Ay, sir, a good many year," said Manlinson. "I've been most everywhere, I do believe; but my wife, she got sickened of it at last, and I settled down here fourteen or fifteen years ago, and I like it very well. A fine place, ain't it, sir?"

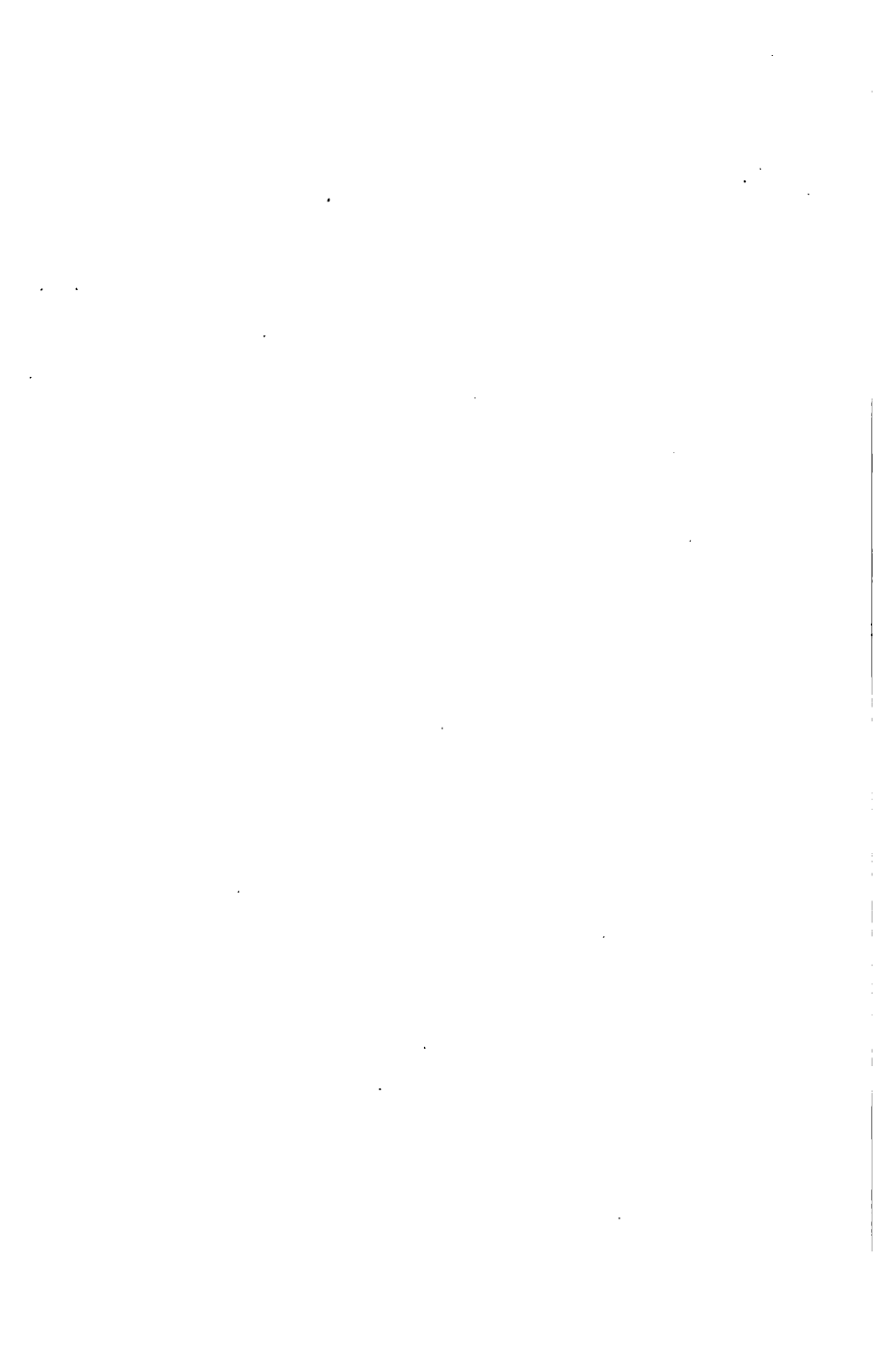
"Very," said Sir Reginald, abstractedly, "but a very lonely life, I should think. Does not your daughter find it so? Do you like such a wild home, my child?"

"Yes, sir, very much," answered Hazel. "I have lived here so long. I think it is beautiful!"

"And she will have her books an' things, you know, sir," said Manlinson; "she calls them her company. She's



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gettin' on first rate—too fast for a poor lighthouse-keeper's daughter, we tells her, for we don't quite see the good on't. But there, she always were a good lass, and we can't abear to go against her."

"Then you like books and music better than scrubbing and cleaning?" said Sir Reginald. "Where did you get such tastes, my child?"

"I don't know, sir," answered Hazel, in a low voice. "I think I have always liked them better."

Sir Reginald looked at her fixedly for a few moments; then, turning to her mother, said abruptly—

"Are you natives of this part of the country? Was your daughter born at Pointhaven?"

Mrs. Manlinson turned a shade paler, as she answered, quietly—"No, sir, we come from Sussex. That's where I lived while Manlinson were at sea."

"You don't remember living anywhere but at the lighthouse, I suppose, Hazel?" said Sir Reginald, kindly.

"No, sir," she answered, in a rather troubled voice. "Sometimes I fancy that I can remember things, but I don't think I do really. I was not three years old when we left Stonybeach."

"Stonybeach!" exclaimed Sir Reginald. Then in a calmer tone he added—"There was once a terrible shipwreck there, I have heard. Were you there at the time, Mrs. Manlinson?"

"Yes, sir," she said, again in a half defiant tone. "A bad shipwreck that were, to be sure!"

"Can you tell me any particulars respecting it?" asked Sir Reginald, still exerting himself to speak quietly, though his heart was beating violently. "I have a very special reason for asking, for in that shipwreck I lost some who were very dear to me."

"Well, now, it's lucky you should have come to us, sir," said the lighthouse-keeper. "My wife can tell you pretty

nigh all there is to tell about that ere wreck, for she lived on the beach, and the only poor fellow that weren't drowned were brought to her house for shelter, and she and another woman nursed him and brought him round again. You tell the gentleman all about it, Mary."

But for once Mrs. Manlinson's usual composure appeared to have deserted her. Was it because the strange gentleman's eyes were fixed so unwaveringly upon her, seeming to read her through and through, that she was nervous, being such a plain woman, and not used to grand company? Or was it some other feeling which made her hesitate, and turn pale, before she could find words to speak?

"Do not be afraid," said Sir Reginald, encouragingly, and Manlinson, by way of apologising for his wife's confusion, explained, "That her nerves had been a bit shook by that shipwreck; she never could abear to talk much on it."

"But try, Mary, there's a good woman," he said to her, kindly, "for if so be as it will give the poor gentleman any comfort to hear what you can tell, I'm sure you'll try an' satisfy him. I wasn't at home myself, sir."

"I wished especially to know whether any lives were saved," said Sir Reginald, in a low voice. "I think you said that only one sailor was saved? But did no one else escape? I hoped that some one might have survived who could tell me something of my wife and child. They perished in that terrible wreck off Stonybeach, and strange to say, my child's name was the same as that of your own daughter—Hazelel."

The last vestige of Mrs. Manlinson's composure had now disappeared; she was trembling like a leaf, and could hardly stand. Her husband stood looking at her with wide-open mouth and astonished, bewildered eyes, while Hazel, overcome with a variety of strange emotions—that strange terror of shipwrecks which she so often felt,

mingling with all sorts of vague recollections, and bewilderment at her mother's terrified demeanour—darted forward, and hardly knowing what she did, clung to the stranger's arm, crying—

“Oh, who am I? Tell me who I am? What does it all mean?”

Sir Reginald put his arm round her, his face working with emotion. “I do not know yet, my child,” he said, in a hoarse voice. “Wait a little—your mother is trying to speak. Do not be afraid, Mrs. Manlinson. What have I asked that you should be so much distressed?”

“Take her—take her, if she is yours!” cried Mrs. Manlinson, sobbing hysterically. “God knows, I never meant any harm! Oh, John, John, you'll never forgive me!”

“What is it, woman?” asked Manlinson, sternly, his honest face greatly agitated. “Come here, my little lass. Who says you ain't my own little Hazel? Who dares to talk of takin' my girl away? Dost love thy old father, bairn?”

“Yes, dear father!” cried Hazel, drawing his strong arm round her neck, and hiding her face on his shoulder. “You know I do! What do they mean, father? Oh, mother, dear, what is it?”

But Mrs. Manlinson had rushed from the room. Presently she returned, holding her apron to her eyes, and in her other hand a little nightdress, beautifully embroidered, which she thrust into Sir Reginald's hand, saying, with unnatural calmness—

“There—that's what was on her—I haven't nothing else. I've always kept it. *You'll* know if them letters is your daughter's name. Oh, dear! oh, dear! To think I should ever have come to see this day!”

With trembling fingers Sir Reginald took the little nightdress and turned it over till he found in one corner

the letters "Hazelel R." worked into a peculiar device with red silk. Then it dropped from his hand; he reeled and would have fallen, had not Mr. Stuart supported him and gently placed him in a chair, where he fainted quite away. Manlinson, who had been looking on in stony, speechless bewilderment, roused himself to fetch water for Sir Reginald, who came back to himself slowly, after some minutes' unconsciousness, and looked round him with a bewildered stare.

"This is proof enough," he said at last, faintly. "She must be—she is—my daughter!"

"Your daughter, sir!" exclaimed Manlinson, starting forward, his face flushed with anger. "Beggin' your pardon, sir, that's quite impossible, for she's mine!"

"I cannot understand," said Sir Reginald, still scarcely able to speak, and looking very much perplexed. "Look here," and he drew from his pocket a handkerchief, and pointed to one corner where the letters "Reginald R." were worked in precisely the same device as those on the nightdress. "I brought this with me," he said, "thinking it might be of use. See, all of you. Is it not evident to you that these marks were worked by the same hand?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Stuart. "The letters are of a very uncommon form, and correspond exactly on each article."

Manlinson turned quite white, but shook his head hopelessly. "I don't know what it all means," he said. "I never set eyes on that ere dress before. Hazel's *my* lass, and that's all I know." Then turning fiercely to his still sobbing wife, he said—"Where did you get that nightdress from, woman? Why did you never show it me afore? What's the meaning of this gentleman comin' here to my house and sayin' my child is his daughter? Speak, I tell thee! What have ye done?"

"You'll never forgive me!" wailed the unhappy woman;

"but I didn't—oh, I didn't mean no harm!—I did it to save ye, John, because I thought you'd break your heart when you came home to find your bairn in the churchyard!"

"What!" cried her husband. "What is it ye have been keepin' from me all these fifteen years? If our bairn is in the churchyard, whose is this?"

"I suppose she's the gentleman's own daughter, as he says," sobbed his wife, quailing before he husband's wrath. "She *ain't* your bairn, Manlinson, nor mine neither. There, ye know it now! Oh, my poor man!"

"Ye have deceived me, woman," said the lighthouse-keeper, in a deep, suppressed voice. "Ye have deceived me this fifteen year, and I don't know as I can ever forgive thee. Speak out now, and tell the truth, do ye hear? *What* is it you've done?"

"I loved her like my own child," sobbed Mrs. Manlinson, "an' I didn't think as anybody would ever come for her after all these years. They gave her to me, poor little lass, all drippin', an' cold, an' half dead, an' I took her an' brought her to, an' kept her in my own wee bairn's place, as I'd only laid in the churchyard a week afore."

"Where did they bring her from?" asked Sir Reginald, excitedly. "Who brought her to you?"

"It was the shipwreck, along off Stonybeach," said the poor woman, despairingly. "My house was right close again the water, an' I see the ship go down, out away across the sea—right sudden-like it went, an' they say there weren't a soul saved."

"Well?" said Manlinson, sternly, his face white and drawn, with pain and amazement. "Make haste an' finish. I can't bear much more."

"There was a life-boat went out, but the ship went down afore it could get at her," went on Mrs. Manlinson, with nervous rapidity, "and there weren't no one brought

back in it. But after a bit there was a great spar washed up on the beach, and they found a man tied on to it—that man's Tom Shipwell, John"—Hazel uttered a low cry, and pressed forward tremblingly—"an' he was holding in his arms a poor little babe, that they said was dead. But I'd just lost my own, an' I was crazy-like to take the poor little thing into my arms, an' I made them give it to me, and after a bit I got it round again, an' it didn't die. I kept it, an' as we couldn't hear nothing of its friends, and there weren't no inquiries made after it, I says to myself, 'I haven't told Manlinson yet about our fifth babe dyin' like the rest'—for there hadn't been no mail since it was took, John—'an,' I says, I won't tell him now; I'll keep this poor little babe, as the sea has brought it to me in my own little girl's place, and when he comes home I won't say nothin' about it, an' he'll never know it ain't his own.' For he'd written a day or two before to tell me he was on his way back, an' wasn't going seafaring no more, but had got this place here at the lighthouse, and I was to come down directly, and wait here for him. So I knew there'd be nobody to tell him about the poor little lass. It was all to save ye, John—indeed it was! I didn't do it to deceive you like—indeed I didn't! Sir"—and she turned imploringly to Sir Reginald, "he said after we'd lost four little babes, that he never could abear to loss another, an' that his heart would break straight out if we had ever another little one took from us, an' so I couldn't bear to tell him his little daughter, that he was counting of seeing, had been put away with the rest in the churchyard—for she were born after he went away to sea, you know, sir—an' so, when they put Hazel into my arms, I said, 'She'll take little Nelly's place, and her father won't never know.' And when he were come home, an' said how beautiful she were, an' how proud he was of his little daughter, I never dared tell

him. I never thought as anybody would come an' ask us to give her up!"

"And was she wearing this when she was given to you?" asked Sir Reginald, taking up the little nightdress, and looking eagerly at the mark upon it.

"Yes, sir," answered Mrs. Manlinson. "It was late evening when the ship went down, an' the little thing had been put to bed. I took it, an' locked it up, an' never showed it to nobody, but I've always kept it careful-like, lest anything should happen. Tom Shipwell said I'd better."

"Who is Tom Shipwell?" asked Mr. Stuart, seeing that Sir Reginald was quite unable to speak.

"He is the man as was saved from the ship, sir," she answered, "and had the babe in his arms when they drifted ashore. They brought him to my house—there was another woman who shared it with me—an' we nursed him till he got well, an' then he went off to sea again."

"He knew the child's name, then?" said Mr. Stuart.

"No, sir, he didn't," said Mrs. Manlinson. "They took him up somewhere in a boat, a day or two before the ship were wrecked, and he never saw her till the storm came on and the people was all called up out of their cabins. He told me he never heard her name, but he saw a beautiful young lady holding the poor little thing in her arms almost to the last minute, an' just when the squall came that turned the ship right over, she screamed out loud to him—'cause he was near to her—to save her child, an' he took it, an' told her he'd save it if he could. And then he lashed the lady to one bit of wood, an' himself to another, with the child in his arms, an' she were just trying to tell him who she was, when the ship went right over, an' he never saw the lady again, an' he never knew what happened till he found himself in my cottage."

"The name of the ship—what was it?" gasped Sir Reginald.

"The *Wanderer*, sir," answered Mrs. Manlinson, in an exhausted tone. "They sent out boats to look for the bodies, but there weren't none found. I came away down here as soon as Shipwell had gone, an' the babe was well enough for me to bring her—an' my poor man there, he hasn't never known as she wasn't his own child. An' he'll never forgive me!"

She broke into a stormy passion of sobs, but her husband did not speak. He had turned away, and was leaning his arms upon the table, and his face was hidden upon them. He made no movement, and uttered no sound. His grief was utterly speechless—far too great for sobs and tears. It seemed too terrible a shock to be true. Hazel ran to him and put her arms round his neck, begging him to look up and speak to her, but he could not. The poor child was too entirely bewildered and astonished to know how she felt; her chief idea at the moment was to comfort her poor father—the only father she had ever known—who was in such terrible sorrow.

Mr. Stuart got up and left the room, and there was silence for some minutes, till Sir Reginald said, in a low, painfully eager voice—

"Hazel, you will try and love a new father? And you—kind and dearly-loved protectors of my daughter—will you forgive a long heart-broken father for claiming his own? That Hazel *is* my daughter is now proved without a doubt, but I hardly know how to rejoice in the presence of such sorrow. Let me explain clearly. It was in the wreck of the *Wanderer* that my wife and baby-daughter, as I thought, perished. My daughter's name is the same as your own, and her age also. The mark upon this little nightdress, which was worn by the child rescued by Shipwell, is the peculiar mark always used by my wife, and corresponds to her mark upon this handkerchief of mine, and, as you see, that little child's surname commenced with an R. *My*

name is Ravenstone—Sir Reginald Ravenstone—and that little baby saved fifteen years and a-half ago was Hazelel Ravenstone, and is the Hazel now before me, without a doubt.”

“Hazel not my daughter!” said the lighthouse-keeper, raising his head and looking vacantly around him. “And you thought not to break my heart, wife? Better to have had it broken years ago, woman, when you laid the babe in the churchyard, than now, when they take my living daughter from me! Take her, sir, if she is yours. She were always a good lass, and she won’t quite forget her old father, I think. There—you ain’t mine, Hazel; there’s your father!”

And with a harsh, hysterical laugh, Manlinson put her into Sir Reginald’s arms and rushed from the room. His wife followed, still weeping in hopeless grief at the loss of her daughter and at her husband’s anger, and Hazel and her newly-found father were left alone.





CHAPTER XXX.

"Bits of joy and bits of sorrow,
Strangely crossed and interlaced."

—BONAR.

SIR REGINALD RAVENSTONE returned home with Mr. Stuart that night in an almost delirious state of joy ; and yet not unmixed joy, for his heart, which had so long ached with his own grief, now ached most painfully for the poor, unhappy father whom he was robbing of his only child. The mother he did not pity so much, for though her sorrow was also very great, it was a sorrow for which she had been in a certain degree prepared. But that of her husband, whom she had deceived for so many years, was indeed terrible. All that night he sat by the kitchen fire, his face buried in his hands, moaning in tearless grief, and unable to speak, except to murmur repeatedly, in a tone which nearly broke his wife's heart—

"You have deceived me, woman, you have deceived me !"

Mrs. Manlinson sat at the opposite corner of the fireside, weeping bitterly nearly all the night through, feeling keenly the reproaches of her husband, which she knew she deserved, in spite of the kind and loving motives of her deception. Again and again she reiterated her cause, and explained, in a pleading voice, that it was her love for her husband,

and her anxiety to save him pain, which had led her to act as she had done—but only to hear the same broken-hearted answer—“You have deceived me, woman.” All night they sat theretogether—together, but more widely apart than they had ever yet been in their many happy years of married life; and it was only when the first gleams of early dawn stole in through the chinks in the shutters, that Manlinson, touched at last by his wife’s continual sobbing, began to relent in his heart towards her, and to remember what a good, faithful wife she had always been to him in all but this one great deception.

“Mary,” he said, at last, in a low, hoarse voice, “you’ve done wrong, and it’s been hard to forgive ye, but you’ve been a good lovin’ wife to me this many year, and I believe you didn’t mean no harm. I believe as you meant it for the best, and wanted to save me from grievin’ for the poor little one in the churchyard, as you say. And you forgot that we mustn’t ‘do evil, that good may come.’ But the anger’s gone now, Mary, and I’ll forgive ye, and we’ll make it up, for it seems like I don’t know how to bear it alone. And you an’ I have pulled together many a year now, wife, and we won’t quarrel now we’re gettin’ old, and we’ll soon have none but our two selves left in the old place. Life ain’t worth much now *she’s* goin’, but maybe after a while it’ll seem a bit better, if only you an’ me can pull together still.”

“I’d never have done it, John,” sobbed his wife, “if it hadn’t been for what you said when the other bairns died. I never thought what a lot of deceivin’ it would bring me to! I thought maybe you’d stop lovin’ me when you found our Nelly had gone like the rest, an’ I couldn’t abear to lose your love. I’ve never deceived you in nothin’ else, John—indeed I haven’t—an’ I wish I hadn’t in this now—that I do!”

“We’ve got to forgive our enemies,” said Manlinson, in

a low voice, "and it seems like I ought to forgive thee first, wife. And I have forgiven thee now, so we won't say no more about it. Only I wish I'd never lived to see my daughter another man's child ! It's hard, that is !"

And Mrs. Manlinson could not comfort him. To her it was a great comfort that she had his forgiveness, but she could not herself look forward to their solitary life henceforth, when their beautiful daughter should have left them, without shuddering, and she knew her husband's grief must necessarily be much greater than her own, the shock having been such a totally unexpected one to him. It was the evil day which she had often secretly dreaded of late years. It had come at last, and was no less terrible than she had pictured it. But as long as her husband forgave her, and they could sorrow together, just as they had for long years worked together, she could bear the pain better.

As the light came at last, streaming in through the shutter chinks, she rose and opened them, and then crept upstairs and peeped into her daughter's room—alas, her *daughter's* no longer in truth. Hazel sat at the window ; the blind was up, and she was resting her arms on the window bench. She was looking out dreamily across the sea, and did not hear Mrs. Manlinson's step till she stood quite close to her.

"Why, bairn, ye haven't sat up here all night, have ye !" the woman exclaimed. "Ye haven't slept in your bed, I see that, poor little lass ! But what will the new father say to thee, sittin' up like this, fit to catch your death of cold ?"

"I couldn't sleep, mother," said Hazel, wearily. "Everything feels so strange, and I thought I'd like to see the sun rise once more—before——oh, mother, does poor father feel any better ? I couldn't rest for thinking of him."

"He don't feel much better, not yet," said Mrs. Manlinson, drawing Hazel's head fondly against her shoulder, and wiping her own eyes with the corner of her apron.

"Tain't likely he can just yet, you know, dear. But he's forgiven me, Hazel, my darlin', an' I can bear to lose ye better if I don't lose my poor man's love too. But it's hard, that it is, when I've loved ye as my own child all these years!"

"Don't cry, mother, dear," said Hazel, gently; "I've been thinking and thinking about it all night, and I'm so glad and so sorry both at the same time. I don't know what I feel like exactly. Only I've always felt so strange, you know, mother, and this seems too wonderful to be true!"

"It's true enough, worse luck," said Mrs. Manlinson, "an' you'll soon be a fine lady, Hazel. You're fit for it, that you are, an' always was, an' you'll soon get to love your new father. He's a real noble-lookin' gentleman!"

"I do love him, poor father!" said Hazel, clasping her hands, "and I want to make him happy, he has suffered so much. But how can I leave you, and my other *father*, and this dear old lighthouse, where I have lived nearly all my life? Mother, let us go down and try to comfort poor father. I can't bear to think how miserable he is!"

And taking Mrs. Manlinson's hand, Hazel went downstairs with her to the kitchen, and stole softly to the lighthouse-keeper's side, kneeling down beside him, and drawing his arm round her. The poor man's unnatural calmness gave way then, and all three mingled their tears together. How long they sat there they scarcely knew. Mrs. Manlinson was the first to rouse herself and set about her housework, for Sir Reginald would be sure to come over early, and the place must be tidied up for his reception. Hazel tried to help her, but she was exhausted by her night's watching; and after a pretence of breakfast had been gone through, her mother made her go and lie down on the sofa in the parlour, and try to get a little sleep. Manlinson wandered about the house restlessly for a while,

and then he too went into the parlour, and sat down near the sofa, to watch his "daughter" sleeping at last from exhaustion.

He was still sitting there, with folded arms, the tears rolling slowly down his cheeks, when a knock at the door was heard, and his wife ushered in Sir Reginald Ravenstone, retreating as soon as she had done so to continue her housework, in which she tried, by doing a double amount, to forget her sorrow. Sir Reginald stood with folded arms, and looked down at his unconscious daughter for some moments in silence. His look said plainly that he was well satisfied with her—that in spite of her lowly bringing-up and humble home for so many years, she was a daughter of whom he need by no means be ashamed.

"She'll be a good daughter, sir," said Manlinson, in a broken voice, "for she's always been a good one to we. We've never had no fault to find with her, except for likin' her books an' things a bit more than her mother an' I thought good for her. I were just watchin' her a bit, sir, for it's hard to part, and seemed like I must look at her while I could."

"My poor fellow!" said Sir Reginald, "I well know how hard it must be for you. From my own suffering for the past fifteen years and a-half, I well know how to feel for yours. I wish that you could have been spared such sorrow!"

"It comes harder-like on me than on my poor wife," said Manlinson, "after thinkin' all these year as she were nobody's child but mine; though it's hard enough on her too, poor thing! She ought to have told me—but there, she did it out o' love for me, and I've forgiven her; only it's just about knocked me overboard, that it has. I shan't never feel the same again when Hazel's gone. I shan't never get over it this side the grave, sir. You'll soon want to be takin' her away, sir?"

"I will not hurry you or her," said Sir Reginald, looking down fondly upon his daughter. "Till she is ready and willing to come to me, I will not press the matter. And you, Manlinson—you and your wife have brought her up, and loved her for years as your own child. I am too grateful to you for the kindness and love you have given her, to snatch her from you suddenly. How eager I am to take my newly-found daughter to my own home, you can, I dare say, well imagine. But I will wait. Tell me, however—has she been happy in her life here? Has she been one with you and your friends, or have you noticed in her anything which has ever led you to suspect the truth?"

"Why, she've always been a queer lass ever since she could speak, sir," replied Manlinson. "She've always been a puzzle to me, with her books, an' her musickin', an' her queer fancies, an' such like, and she's never made friends with our folk. She didn't never seem to take to 'em, somehow, and I couldn't make out what made her so different-like to we. But I never thought she weren't my own bairn. I never did. Of course I hadn't no reason for thinkin' that, sir; it weren't natural I should. And that's why it comes such a shock. There, I'll go, sir; she's wakin'—bless her heart! She's a rare good girl, sir, an' she's more fit for a gentleman's daughter than she is for mine, I know that well enough!"

Hazel started when she opened her eyes and saw Sir Reginald at her side looking down at her with a face full of intense, yearning love. She sprang up, and he folded her in his arms in a close embrace, murmuring broken words of joy and thankfulness for the treasure thus restored to him. And that resting-place was a strangely comfortable and natural one to the poor child, worn out with the conflicting emotions of the past sleepless night, and the perplexing thoughts of many years. And holding her father's hand in her own, she sat on a low stool at his feet for hours that

morning, and told him all he wished to hear of her lighthouse life; of her puzzling thoughts and misty recollections; her vague terror at the mention of shipwrecks, and her frequently-repeated, confused dreams of a sunny land and palm trees, with dark moving figures beneath, and of a tall lady, dressed in white, whose image had always eluded her grasp as soon as she woke. And she told him of her longing after that beautiful music to which she had listened in her childish days through the windows of Pointhaven houses, and that bright, happy life among books, and pictures, and beautiful things, of which she had in the same manner obtained glimpses. And she told him how she had craved for just *one* friend who would tell her about those things for which she longed, and who would understand and sympathise with her love for them. And how at last Mr. Everard had become her friend and her teacher, and had helped to make her happy. She told him too of the great kindness and goodness of her so-thought father and mother, of the indulgence with which they had always treated her and her fancies, and of her love for the old lighthouse and the stormy sea always raging round the grey, weather-beaten rocks, where she had played from childhood.

She could not bear the thought of leaving that old home, but she listened eagerly to her father's description of Ravenstone Park and its beauties, and was much more reconciled to the idea of becoming its mistress when she heard that the sea was only a few miles distant, and could be both seen and heard from a hill, which rose up just on the outskirts of the park. But the thought that she was no longer Hazel, the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, but, as her father told her, Miss Ravenstone of Ravenstone, was much too strange as yet to seem like truth, and connected with too much pain and sorrow too, to be altogether pleasant. But yet Hazel felt that already she breathed

more freely, and although this was only the second time she and her father had talked together, it seemed more natural to her to be with him, and more comfortable to her to talk with him, than it had ever been with her *other* father and mother, in spite of her love for them. For with them she had always had the feeling that she was not understood, and that there was *something* wanting in the love she felt for them—something she could not understand, but which had always been there ever since she had been old enough to think about it.

Sir Reginald stayed all day at the lighthouse, and returned to St. Mary's Vicarage at night, looking younger and brighter than he had done for years. He was going back to Ravenstone next day to prepare everything for his daughter's reception at the Park, and had arranged that she should remain at the lighthouse until all was ready. There was a good deal to be done, for he wished to brighten up the house, and give it an altogether more cheerful aspect, before bringing Hazel to it. It was a gloomy place at present. Sir Reginald had taken no pains to make it bright and pleasant while his own heart was full of gloom. It had suited his mood better to wander through the dark, dingily-furnished apartments, which had been untenanted ever since his parents' death about eighteen years ago. But now everything was to be very different, and Sir Reginald could talk of nothing all that evening but his plans for the improvement of his house. Mrs. Stuart, however, advised him not to take too much trouble about it, for a few touches from Hazel's fingers would do more to give it the bright, cheerful appearance which it wanted than anything he could do. A young girl's presence in the house would work wonders, she told him, which doctrine Sir Reginald was very ready to believe. His pride and joy in his newly-found daughter were intense, and had she been brought up as a princess instead of a lighthouse-keeper's

daughter, he declared he could not have been better satisfied with her.

Her education he intended to take, as far as possible, into his own hands. She had rather tremblingly asked him if he should send her to school, feeling a mournful sense of her deficiency in almost all the branches of a young lady's education. But she had learnt much more from reading than she was herself aware of, as her father had found when he had very gently and cautiously inquired into her attainments; and he had assured her that nothing was further from his thoughts than the idea of sending her to school, and that what he could not teach her himself she should learn from masters. But Hazel's opinion, sorrowfully repeated over and over to herself, after her father had left her, was, that no master could ever equal Mr. Everard in her estimation. Giving up her lessons with him was one of the worst trials in this strange and unexpected change in her life, and it was with tears in her eyes that she entered his room on the day following her father's departure for Ravenstone, and took her old seat by his side, to write out music for him for almost the last time.

"So I am going to lose my little pupil," said the blind organist, regretfully. "What strange tale is this about the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, and what grand young lady has she suddenly turned into? Tell me all about it, my child, and whether it is the truth that you are Hazel Manlinson no longer, but Miss Ravenstone?"

With a mixture of pride and shyness, and joy and sorrow, strangely blended, Hazel told her story—the story which still seemed to her more like a dream than a reality.

"And I am to go home next week," she said. "Oh, Mr. Everard, I am not fit to be Miss Ravenstone! I am frightened when I think of it—I, who have run wild on the rocks all my life, and learnt so little! How shall I ever learn all that young ladies ought to know?"

"You know as much upon many subjects as a good many young ladies, my child," answered Mr. Everard, "and the rest will come by degrees. You are not very old yet, and may have some years of quiet study before you need wish to engross much of the world's attention."

"The world!" said Hazel, in an alarmed tone. "I don't want to see the world, Mr. Everard—I mean, what people call the world. I want to stay at home with papa, and talk to him, and learn all about a great many things which he has to tell me. I don't want to live a gay, grand life—I don't think it would make me happy. Only there will be some things to do which will seem very strange to me, and I shall be so afraid of not doing them right. I wonder who will teach me music at Ravenstone? I wish you could come with me, and teach me always, and that I could go on writing your music for you! Who will help you when I am gone?"

"I don't know, my child," answered Mr. Everard, sadly. "I shall miss the kind eyes which have seen for me for so many months, and the kind fingers which have written for me. But, Hazel, I have sometimes felt that you were some fairy nymph out of the sea, who might one day slip from me suddenly. I have never seen you, but I have wondered over you quite as much as any of those who *have* seen you, and who have found so much fault with me for teaching you. They wondered at you for your strange love of learning, but they blamed those who encouraged you in it. I wondered, but with different feelings, for I believed that God had sent you to me, that I might help you—for some end which I could not then see, but about which I often made conjectures, not such romantic ones either, as it turned out!"

"I am very grateful to you for all you have taught me," said Hazel, earnestly. "So many things will seem easier to me now than they would have done if you had never helped

me to understand them. And if you had taught me about nothing but music, that would have been enough to make me always love you and feel grateful to you."

"You are not going very far away," said Mr. Everard. "You will come and see your old blind friend sometimes, when you are in Pointhaven?"

"Indeed I will!" cried Hazel; "and I shall often come to Pointhaven, you know, to see the lighthouse and my dear father and mother. It is so strange to have two fathers! Everything is very strange. I hardly know yet whether it is not all a dream."

"Miss Lilian will be sorry that you are going away," said Mr. Everard. "I think she has enjoyed visiting you in your wild home."

"She has been very kind to me," said Hazel. "I am going to see her to-morrow night; but I am a little afraid, for her aunt, Miss Winifred Raymond, is always so cross to me."

Mr. Everard smiled. "She has been very cross to me too," he said, "and often scolded me for teaching you music. But she will not be cross to Miss Ravenstone, I think."

Hazel smiled rather soberly. It was strange to be called Miss Ravenstone, and she rather shrank from her new dignity. She was loth to leave her wild, free life on the rocks, and settle down to the proprieties and conventionalities necessary to be observed by the young mistress of Ravenstone Park. She feared that she would be constantly breaking through rules, and shocking somebody's sense of decorum. Yet she could not but feel that the *indoor* life would suit her far better than that in her old home, and that she would soon feel far more at home among her father's friends than she had ever felt in the society of the fishwives or rough sailors who had been the most frequent guests at the lighthouse.



CHAPTER XXXI.

"My watch upon this sea-swept cliff is done."

—BONAR.

THE news of the extraordinary event which had befallen the "lighthouse girl" spread like wildfire through Pointhaven, and she was the perpetual topic of conversation during the next few days, both in every drawing-room and every cottage. There were some who said at once, "I told you so," or, "I have felt convinced from the very first that something of this kind would happen." And others, who, though they had never *said* anything of the sort, declared that they had *thought* it for some long time past, and were not in the least surprised at the news. And there were some unbelieving persons who were so very much surprised that they could not believe it at all, and felt compelled to call immediately on all their friends in turn, to hear what *they* thought, and whether the whole thing were really *not* a hoax but a sober reality.

Hazel had a good deal to bear, not only from the rude boys and girls, who called her "Duchess" in the streets more loudly than ever, but also from the many curious, inquiring glances bent upon her by passers-by whenever she walked through the town. The shop-girls ran to the doors to stare at her, and whisper among themselves, and

the servants took special delight in washing and sweeping the doorsteps during the few days which elapsed before Sir Reginald came back to take his daughter home. Hazel avoided the town as much as possible; but she had music to finish writing out for Mr. Everard, which she insisted on completing before her departure, and the daily walks to and from his house were a great trial to her. She was glad when she reached home to hide herself among the lonely rocks again, or go out for a good long row with Manlinson, right out of sight of the curious, impertinent town.

Poor Manlinson! These few days of sorrow had already streaked his hair with grey, and his round, honest face was getting a sharp, pinched look, which Hazel could not bear to see. She felt his eyes and her mother's following her wistfully wherever she went, and she knew they sat up late at night, after she had gone to bed, talking of her over their fire, because their hearts were too sad to let them rest. Sir Reginald, thinking that it might be a comfort to them to continue to live near the daughter they had loved and cherished for their own, had offered Manlinson the post of gate-keeper of Ravenstone Park, but the old sailor could not tear himself away from his seafaring life. He had been born and bred at sea, he said, and never lost sight or sound of it for more than a day or two at a time his whole life long, and now he didn't feel as if he could live anywhere but at the old lighthouse for the rest of his days. It was there, too, that he had first seen his child, Hazel, as he still called her, and there that he had seen her grow up, and he thought he should be happier there than at Ravenstone Park lodge. For he "didn't know as it would make him feel much better to see her every day, when she wasn't his own no longer. Maybe it would only make him feel worse, and he must stay and die on the old rocks, with the sound of the sea in his ears." His wife too thought it was better. Her husband was getting on in years, and would not be

likely to settle in a new place, and she thought, "perhaps, he would get over his trouble better if he had his fishing and his lamps to see to, and his own old friends to cheer him up." So Sir Reginald did not press the point, and only promised that Hazel should come over and see them very often, which arrangement she much preferred, as it would enable her to visit her own beloved haunts, as well as her "parents."

Hazel's last evening in her old home came at length, and she stole out alone after tea, with a shawl over her head, to watch the great waves, for the last time, dashing over the seaweed-crested peaks, and the red light flickering over them. She thought the great wide ocean, and the dim line of rocks towering up to the cliff, looked more strangely still and solemn than ever on this night, the eve of the great and half-dreaded change in her life. Her heart ached at parting with these old, speechless friends of hers—the rocks, with their clothing of seaweeds, and shells, and beautiful things, and the tossing boats and the distant ships, which she had delighted to watch, day after day, as long as she could remember; and yet how it yearned to comfort her noble, but so sorrowful-looking father, and to make amends to him for his long years of suffering and desolation!

"I can never make up to him for my mother's loss, though," she said to herself; "my beautiful mother, whose picture he showed me! I wish I could remember her! Sometimes I think I can, but it is only a shadowy fancy of her, and it won't stay with me. When I think I can really see her, she is gone. If she could have been saved instead of me! But God knew best, and He was very good not to let us both die, and give one of us back to papa at last. I will try so hard to make him happy, but I am afraid that when he finds out how little I know of what young ladies ought to know, he will be displeased with me. I am glad God made me beautiful! Papa says I am beautiful, so I

suppose it must be true. How grand it sounds—'Miss Ravenstone of Ravenstone!' Only it is so hard to believe that it is myself. I can't feel like anything but Hazel, the lighthouse-keeper's daughter."

And the girl sighed, as she crept lower down on the rocks and took one of her old accustomed seats close to the great raging waves, which rolled and foamed over one peak after another, till she felt their spray dashing all over her like a shower-bath.

"I wonder when I shall sit here again!" she said, half aloud. "I am sorry to leave this beautiful place! I shall never like any other home so well, though I suppose Ravenstone will feel like home after a little while, because it is where my own father is, and that *must* be home. I wish mother had told father—my other father—about me long ago; it would not have been quite so dreadful for him now if he had known that somebody else might come for me some day. And now he looks so sad and so ill—I can't bear to go away from him, and not belong to him any more!"

And taking one more last long look all round, Hazel sprang up and ran indoors to try and comfort him and his wife, and tell them over again, as she had told them many times, of the love and gratitude she would always feel for them, and to assure them that she would come back and see them as soon as she could.

She could not sleep when she went up to bed, and dressing herself again, she crept softly up the narrow stairs to the gallery, which ran round outside the lighthouse, just beneath the lamps. It was very dark, except where the red light shone out across the sea, making a bright red path in the midst of the surrounding gloomy black water. Her thoughts went back to that evening a few months before, when Arthur Thursfield had watched her light the lamps, and had stood with her, looking out upon the same dark, weird scene. She wondered what he would say to this

strange thing which had happened to her—whether he would be as kind to Miss Ravenstone as he had been to Hazel, the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, if she ever saw him again. And she wondered very much whether she *would* ever see him. She thought, with a disappointed, regretful feeling, that when she was at Ravenstone, nearly fifty miles away, there would not be much chance of it. She would like to see him again, for talking to her father was not quite like talking to him. He was young, and she had had so few young friends, and he had loved just the things which she loved. At any rate, Lilian would come and see her at Ravenstone, and that would make her very happy, for she had a sort of reverential love for the fair, sweet-faced girl who had captivated her childish fancy years ago.

"Perhaps some day she will tell me what her trouble is," she thought, "and what it is that her brother is saving money and working so hard for. I shall be rich now. I wonder if I could help them, without letting them find it out? I wish I could!"

Then her thoughts strayed away to her cousin Jack. She would have liked to bid him good-bye, and wondered that he had not come to see her, after her father had written to tell him what had happened.

"Fancy, if I had promised to marry him!" she thought. "How strange it would have been! I wonder what I should have done! But I could not have married him then any better than I could now; and I wish he had never asked me! He will find some one else one day, I think, who will make him happy. Poor Jack! I didn't think that he thought of me like that—for one minute! I am so young still; much too young to think about marrying."

"Hazel!" called Mrs. Manlinson from below. "What are ye doin' up there, my child? You'll catch your death of

cold, and never be fit to see Sir Reginald to-morrow, if you don't come down an' go to bed this minute."

"I don't feel as if I could sleep, mother," said Hazel, turning away reluctantly from the fresh night air, and locking the gallery door after her; "but I'll come down and try. I've been looking out just for the last time."

"I thought 'twas the last time a while ago, when you was out on the rocks," said her mother, with a sorrowful smile.

"Yes, but I wanted to look again," said Hazel. "I'm never tired of looking. Mother, will you keep my room for me just as it is till I come to see you, so that it will look just like my own little room still?"

"Ay, that I will, bairn," said Mrs. Manlinson, with a half sob. "Your father an' me we couldn't touch it nohow. There—give me a kiss, an' go to bed; you're just as cold as you can be. A strange lass you are, sure enough, stoppin' up there alone in the dark!"

"I liked it," said Hazel, "and the lamps made it bright. Call me early to-morrow, please, dear mother. I want to have a long time with you and father before papa comes for me. He will come early, because we are going to see Mr. Everard before we go to Ravenstone."





CHAPTER XXXII.

"Didst thou not hear a noise?
I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry."

—*Macbeth.*

REALLY I am quite tired of the name of that girl, Hazel!" exclaimed Miss Raymond, returning home from the town one afternoon, and entering the drawing-room, where Lilian sat reading with her Aunt Evelyn. "Wherever one goes, she is the beginning and end of the conversation. The Argyles could talk of nothing else, and even good Mrs. Roper is infected with the general spirit. And as for the shopkeepers—I have been into half-a-dozen shops this afternoon, and instead of hearing the usual remarks upon the weather, have heard nothing but comments upon 'the strange event which has lately taken place at the light-house.' I am quite sick of it all! The girl's head was completely turned, no doubt, before she went away, by the fuss made about her. She was always proud enough, that I could see, and what she will be as 'Miss Ravenstone,' I cannot imagine."

"I don't think she was so proud as you fancied, Aunt Winifred," said Lilian. "I know there is a sort of proud expression in her face, but I like it; and I don't think she is a bit more proud, really, than she ought to be. I

suppose it is natural that people should talk about her a good deal; they are all so taken by surprise. Didn't you like Sir Reginald's face?"

"I don't look at men's faces," said Miss Winifred, with superb indifference. "They are all alike, more or less. I dare say Sir Reginald is a very good man, as men go. None of them are to be trusted."

"You are very hard upon them, aunt," said Lilian, smiling. "I know a good many whom I can trust."

"No harder than they deserve," retorted Miss Winifred. "Your trust in people is a beautiful feature in your character, my dear Lilian, but when you have lived as long as I have, you will be obliged to discard your trust, among many other of the romances of youth. What book is that which you were poring over so intently just now? Something instructive and wholesome, I hope?"

"It is a book which Mr. Auriol brought me this afternoon," replied Lilian, her face tinging a little. "It is a very interesting one."

"Mr. Auriol brought you!" exclaimed Miss Winifred. "Most improper in Mr. Auriol, I must say, to bring gifts to a young lady of whom he knows so little! I thought he was a man of sober and staid character; but one cannot even trust a clergyman in these days!"

"He has only *lent* it to me, Aunt Winifred," said Lilian. "He was telling me of it the other night, when we dined at the Ropers', and I said I should like to read it; so he brought it this afternoon."

"Did he come in?" asked Miss Winifred, severely.

"Yes, dear Winifred," said Miss Evelyn; "it would scarcely have been polite not to ask him in after his trouble in bringing the book for Lilian. He is a most agreeable companion—far more so than is generally imagined."

"We are in no need of 'agreeable companions,'" said Miss Raymond, "beyond those we have already. Let me

look at the book, Lilian. Poetry! This is really unbecoming in Mr. Auriol!"

"Why, Aunt Winnie?" inquired Lilian, trying to repress a smile.

"I do not approve of any gentleman lending you books without my sanction," answered her aunt, "especially volumes of poetry. All sentimental nonsense! When did you become so intimate with this man, pray, Lilian?"

"I don't know, aunt," answered Lilian; "I don't think I am very intimate with him. He talks to me sometimes when we meet at people's houses, and——"

"And what?" asked Miss Raymond, sternly.

"I have met him two or three times when I have been out for walks," continued Lilian, blushing at such cross-questioning.

"Where?" inquired Miss Raymond.

"On the beach, and on our road," replied Lilian. "Mr. Auriol takes walks like other people, Aunt Winnie."

"I don't see why he needs to take them upon our road," said Miss Winifred, sharply; "by which you mean the Waterton road, I suppose. It is quite out of his way, and not at all an interesting road to walk on, when you are past the Tower avenue. If Mr. Auriol has any intentions, Lilian, I shall take care to let him know at once that they are not wanted."

Lilian's fair face blushed crimson.

"Mr. Auriol is intending to build new school-rooms, I believe, Winifred," said Miss Evelyn. "That is what he has been talking about this afternoon. I told him we thought them very much needed, and that it would be an excellent work. He is a good, earnest man, I quite think, and I believe he will be very popular when he is better known. I told him that you were much interested in all kinds of parish work, and that the drawing out of plans for new schools or buildings of any kind was a special hobby

of yours, and he said he was sorry you did not happen to be at home."

"Very kind of him," remarked Miss Winifred; but she was much mollified, and made no more disparaging remarks about the unfortunate young vicar who chose the road past the Tower for his "constitutional."

Lilian was allowed to enjoy her new book in peace. That it was very interesting, was evident from the fact, that she did not put it down till tea was announced, and took it up again immediately on her return to the drawing-room.

"I thought you wished to study in your own room to-night, Lilian," remarked Miss Raymond, when half-an-hour had elapsed, and her niece was still deep in poetry. "I ordered your fire to be lighted early on purpose."

"Yes, aunt; I had forgotten," said Lilian, with a start. "I will go in five minutes."

"I will look into your book while you are upstairs," said Miss Winifred, holding out her hand for it, as Lilian rose to go to her room, "and see whether it is a fit one for you to read. By-the-way, you have not heard from your brother lately, have you?"

"No, aunt," answered Lilian, "not for some time; but he told me in his last letter that he was very busy, and might not write for some little while."

"Very well," said Miss Winifred; "I merely thought that he might possibly be unwell. A wound in the side often leaves unpleasant after-effects, and while I have always felt it to be a great mercy that Arthur recovered so soon from his accident, I have doubted whether he would not suffer from it again afterwards. It will be no more than he deserves, but since it does not appear to be the case, we will say no more about him. If he should ever tell you that he is ill, however, you may as well mention it. Young men are very imprudent, and I don't wish Arthur to come to greater harm than he has brought himself to already."

"Thank you, Aunt Winnie," said Lilian; but the idea of Arthur's being ill and unable to write was an unpleasant one, and took away her mind from her studies.

While she was endeavouring, in her own little turret chamber, to make out the meaning of some incomprehensible German sentences, and thinking that if Mr. Auriol, who was a very good German scholar, were at hand, it would be very convenient, an altercation was going on downstairs, in the kitchen, upon which she might have thrown some light.

"I didn't hear it!" Jane the housemaid was saying; "it's only your nonsense again, cook! If you think anybody's there, why don't you go and see?"

"Go and see!" echoed cook, in tones of horror. "What, go out by myself into that 'Jungle' this time of night! I tell you, Jane, I wouldn't do such a thing if missis herself came and ordered me—there! Just you come along into the pantry with me, and if you don't hear the ghost as plain as I do, you'll have no ears, that's all I say!"

Jane went boldly into the pantry, followed by the little kitchen-maid, while cook stood at the door, afraid to enter.

"Well," she said, "don't you hear a noise? I do, and I'm not so near as you. It's just what I heard before. I said it was a ghost then, and I say it now."

"I hear a bird or something moving about in the bushes," said Jane; "that's all I hear—or maybe it's a dog got in, and can't find its way out."

"A dog, you silly!" said cook. "A dog couldn't jump over *that* wall, and how else should it get in, with the gate always locked, and the key in missis's basket? My! there's a whistle too. I'm sure there was."

"An owl screeching," said Jane, scornfully.

"I heard that," said the kitchen-maid, retreating, "and there was something like a footstep too. It ain't no bird, Jane; birds is all asleep long afore now. I believe it's a ghost after all."

"Go out and see, if you won't believe," said cook, turning indignantly to Jane, who still looked incredulous. "If I ask missis for the key, will you go straight in and look? It ain't so late and dark after all; it's only just past seven o'clock."

"I've taken my boots off," answered Jane, not quite ready for that act of heroism, "and I'm not going out into that nasty damp place in my slippers. Besides, you ain't going to frighten missis out of her wits with your nonsense."

"Missis wouldn't be frightened," retorted cook. "You know she ain't afraid of anything. *You're* afraid, that's what it is! I knew you was."

"Miss Evelyn would be frightened anyhow," answered Jane, taking no notice of cook's insult to herself. "Here, come away. Because you believe in ghosts you ain't going to put your nonsense into anybody else's head. If there is one, he can't get nowhere else, that's one thing."

"Except into Miss Lilian's room," said cook. "Dear, dear! I wouldn't be her, so close to that nasty staircase. I know the door is locked, but what is locks to a ghost? I've heard of one that——"

But we will leave cook to relate her former ghostly experiences, and return to the turret room, where Lilian, having also heard the ghost's footstep below, and having also had a handful of dust thrown against her window by the same being's hand, had locked her door carefully, and unlocking the one on the opposite side of the room, had crept down the narrow staircase in the wall to admit the nightly visitor.

"All safe?" asked Arthur, glancing round the room to which Lilian escorted him in triumph. "I've been waiting for you in the 'Jungle' half-an-hour, Lily. I thought you were here, seeing a light through the window, but it was only the fire-light, I suppose?"

"I have only been up a few minutes," said Lilian. "It was fortunate that Aunt Winifred reminded me to come and do my work, or I am afraid I should have forgotten it altogether, for I was engrossed in an interesting book. You are cold from standing out there so long; come nearer the fire. What has brought you here to-night? I had no idea you were coming to Pointhaven again yet."

"No, I have been so busy that I have not had a moment for writing," said Arthur. "This is a flying visit to you on my way to Waterton and one or two other places in that direction. We are to build a new organ in Waterton Parish Church, and I am superintendent of the business, so of course I called here on my way. I shall go on by the last train to-night, and be ready for work early to-morrow morning."

"And you are quite well?" asked Lilian, anxiously. "You have quite got over that accident? Aunt Winifred has been putting it into my head this evening that perhaps you had not, and that it was because you were ill that you did not write."

"I never was better in my life," said Arthur, laughing. "Dr. Lane mended me up quite effectually, with the aid of the glorious Perilpoint air. By-the-by, Lilian, how are my friends at the lighthouse? Have you seen Hazel lately, and is she as devoted to music as ever?"

"I have more to tell you about her than you expect," said Lilian. "Guess what has happened to her, Arthur—that is, if you can? I don't believe you will."

"The most likely thing I can think of," said Arthur, "is that some prince or nobleman has appeared and claimed her as his daughter, and carried her off."

"You call *that* likely!" said Lilian, laughing. "What a nice piece of romance! What puts such an idea into your head?"

"Don't you know I told you I had an idea about the

girl which you would call 'romantic?'" said Arthur. "You guessed what it was, and shared it yourself too, Lily, I believe, so don't laugh at me. What *has* happened?"

"Well, you are very near the truth," said Lilian. "Your prophetic instinct has only led you a little bit too far. She was carried off, just a week ago, by Sir Reginald Ravenstone of Ravenstone."

"Really!" exclaimed Arthur, starting to his feet. "Who is he, Lily? and how on earth has it all happened? Where is Ravenstone?"

"You are very much excited about it," said Lilian, mischievously. "Sir Reginald is an old college friend of Mr. Stuart's, who went out long ago to India, to a position in the Civil Service. He married soon after he went out, and had one daughter named Hazelel, and when she was about two years old he was obliged to send her and his wife home to England for their health. Their ship was wrecked off the coast of Sussex in a terrible storm, and Sir Reginald thought both his wife and child were lost, for it was reported that no lives were saved. However, there were two bodies washed ashore at a little village called Stonybeach—those of a sailor and a little child. They were both alive, and were taken to a cottage where Mrs. Manlinson and another woman were living, quite close to the sea, and where they remained till the man had recovered. He went away again to sea, and Mrs. Manlinson kept the little child and brought it up as her own, in the place of one of the same age which she had lost only a week before. Her husband was at sea at the time; he had gone away before her child's birth, and she had not written to him since its death, so she told him nothing about it, and when he came home he thought the little shipwrecked girl was his own. Mrs. Manlinson had left Stonybeach then, for her husband had told her to come to Southampton to meet him, and they came to Perilpoint lighthouse directly afterwards. So

that he never heard anything about his own child's death, and she never told him until the day that Sir Reginald called at the lighthouse, and found out that Hazel was his own daughter. Fancy the shock it was to the poor man! He has looked quite old and grey ever since."

"Why didn't she tell him?" asked Arthur. "Why did she want to keep it secret?"

"Because they had lost four little children already, before that last one," said Lilian, "and Manlinson had sometimes said to her that his heart would break if they ever lost another; and so when Hazel was not claimed by any one, she thought that by bringing her up as her own child, her husband might be saved the pain of knowing of the death of the last baby, and that she would never need to let him know that Hazel was not his own. It wasn't right of her, of course, but she did it to make him happy, as she thought. She says she was afraid he would stop loving her if he heard that another little one was in the churchyard; and she couldn't bear to tell him of it. Poor woman! I felt very sorry for her when she was telling me all about it, and still more sorry for her husband, who never had had the least idea that Hazel wasn't his own daughter. His wife is sorry enough that she did not tell him the truth at once, as she sees how much worse it is for him now."

"Awful!" said Arthur. "He was always so devoted to Hazel, and so proud of her. *She* must have felt very queer, too, poor girl! I wonder if she is happy as 'Miss Ravenstone!' How did Sir Reginald hear of her, Lily? and what made him suppose that she was his daughter?"

Lilian explained about Mr. Stuart's visit to his friend on hearing that he had returned to his old home; and that it was the *name* of the lighthouse-keeper's daughter which had haunted Sir Reginald ever since Mr. Stuart's mention of it, until, at last, unable to rest, he had gone to Pointhaven for the purpose of seeing and speaking to the girl whose name

was the same as that of his own lost daughter. And how, on his visit to the lighthouse, the whole story had come out by Mrs. Manlinson's own confession.

Arthur was deeply interested. Ever since his stay at the lighthouse, the vision of the keeper's beautiful daughter, and the remembrance of the talk he had had with her, had haunted his memory, and had refused to be driven away; and the more he had thought of her, the more firmly he had felt convinced of the truth of his "romantic notion," as he called it, that she was a "princess in disguise." At any rate, this idea, whether or not there was any foundation for it, had formed an excuse, in his opinion, for his thinking of her as he did, and as he vainly tried *not* to do.

"I wonder what her father will do with her!" he said; "about educating her, I mean. She must feel that she has so much to learn, turning into a young lady suddenly at her age! Is he very rich?"

"I think he is," said Lilian. "They say Ravenstone Park is a beautiful place; but it has been very much neglected, for Sir Reginald's father has been dead about eighteen years, and during his lifetime he could not keep it up very well, for he had some heavy debts to pay off, and that is why his son was obliged to go out to India and work for himself. He got rich out there, Mr. Stuart says, for he did not care to come home after losing his wife and child in that dreadful manner, and worked harder than he need have done, just to keep himself, he says, from going mad. He only came home when his health gave way, and had not been at Ravenstone more than a few weeks when all this happened. You asked about Hazel's education. He is going to teach her all he can, she says, and for the rest, she is to have masters. She is so clever she will soon get on; and everything else—managing the house, I mean, and behaving like Miss Ravenstone—will come to her naturally. I always thought she looked more fit to be

amongst people of that sort than amongst her own rough people. Poor Mr. Everard is quite unhappy, now she is gone. He says she reminded him of his own little daughter whom he lost years ago."

"If I can manage it, I will go and see him on my way back," said Arthur; "and I must go and see the Manlinsons too. Poor things! how horrid lonely they must be! I can't fancy Hazel away from that lighthouse and those rocks. I wonder how she lives without them!"

"I don't know," said Lilian; "she was distressed enough at leaving them. Arthur, no one has ever found out about my staying at Perilpoint with you. The Manlinsons have kept their word, and have never breathed a syllable about it to anybody."

"I wish we could stay there together again! It's a glorious place," said Arthur; "but I have an idea that Hazel herself was part of the charm of it, with her wild songs and strange fancies. Lilian, I have got that organ at St. James', with a very good salary, so we shall get on swimmingly now. I shall save every penny of it, if possible, for our fund. But what a weary while it will take, to get anything like what we want!"

"The end is a little nearer every day," said Lilian, cheerily; "don't despair, Arthur. I don't mean to. What I should like to know is, for *whom* you are working—I mean *whose* money it is you must restore. I wish he would tell you!"

"He won't," said Arthur, "I have tried to find out, but he won't tell me. He always says, 'Wait till you have got all that is necessary, and *then* you shall know.' And he says it in a derisive tone, as much as to say, 'You never *will* get it!' If only he would show a little gratitude, it would seem so much easier."

"I know," said Lilian. "Never mind, though, Arthur, he will thank you some day; I know he will. How long

are you going to be at Otterbury? Tell me about your work; I think it is so interesting."

And for another half-hour they chatted cosily together over Lilian's bright little fire. Then Arthur was obliged to hurry away to catch his train, and Lilian reluctantly conducted him down the staircase, and let him out into the dreary "Jungle."

"If you hear anything of Hazel—I mean Miss Ravenstone," he said, as he bade her good-bye, "you may as well tell me, you know, Lily. I shall always be interested in hearing of her, and I should like to know how she and her new father get on together. I pity those poor Manlinsons dreadfully! If I can manage it, I'll pay you another visit on my way back."

"I'll tell you anything I hear," said Lilian, with a smile. "She's a very grand young lady now, Arthur—Miss Ravenstone of Ravenstone!—as much above Mr. Miller the 'organ-mender' as Hazel the lighthouse-keeper's daughter was below him!"

Arthur winced a little; the idea did not appear to please him.

"Organ-building is a very respectable business; at any rate," he said, "I'm not ashamed of it. But you are right as to that, Lily; the tables *are* turned. However, what does it matter? Hazel and I are not likely to meet again."

"And if you did, she would not look down upon you," said Lilian, affectionately; "I was only joking. Perhaps your work will take you to Ravenstone some day. I should like you to see Sir Reginald."

"Sir Reginald might not like to see me, though," thought Arthur, as he walked rapidly along the narrow winding path which led down the cliff from the Tower to the beach. "He will guard his newly-found daughter pretty closely, I expect. However, what will it matter to me if he does? My life-work must be something more serious at present

than paying visits to young ladies, and will be for some long time to come. But I *should* like to see Hazel, I confess—to see how she takes to her new life. I hope it won't spoil her, and make a fashionable young lady of her, like those individuals I met in Pointhaven this afternoon—Laurences, I think, they were—horrid creatures!”

And Arthur Thursfield arrived at the station in a decidedly discontented frame of mind; and the fact that he had not at all a clear idea of the precise reason of his discontent did not tend to lessen that feeling. He arrived at Otterbury late at night, with the conclusion that he was hungry, tired, and cross, and would probably feel altogether more comfortable next morning; which he might have done had he not dreamt of Hazel and the lighthouse all night, and so had no refreshing sleep to fit him for his day's work.





CHAPTER XXXIII.

"The delight of the village, the ringing joy of
The hall."

—TENNYSON.

TWO years and a few months have passed since the event took place which roused sleepy Pointhaven from its lethargic condition, and created in the old town a greater excitement than it had known for years. Gossiping had reigned supreme for at least a year after Hazel's departure from the lighthouse, but the most unwearied tongues had grown tired at last, and were resting till some new excitement should call them again into action. Very few changes have taken place in these two years, but they have brought a pleasant one to Mr. Everard, for six months ago Mr. Reynolds was dismissed from St. Mary's, and the vacant position was offered to the blind organist of the Parish Church, who of course accepted it only too eagerly. That it was a better position than his own, in a money point of view, was a great thing, but Mr. Everard's chief delight at his change of circumstances, was in the beautiful organ which became his daily companion, in the place of the poor old worn-out instrument at St. Philip's, which had been a greater trial to his nerves and temper for months past, than the good but unmusical vicar could possibly understand.

Mr. Everard's life was still a lonely one, but it was much happier and brighter than it had been during the first few years he had spent in Pointhaven. Mr. Auriol had taken up his cause and become his firm friend, and had got into the habit of strolling into the town hall every Saturday afternoon, just at the time when Lilian Thursfield was taking her organ-lesson, to have a chat with him—at least, that *had* been his habit till about a year ago. Since then Lilian and her two aunts had been abroad, and Mr. Auriol had gone to have his chat with his old friend elsewhere. Whether Miss Raymond had seen further evidences of the clergyman's "intentions" or not, she certainly had taken a grim satisfaction in carrying off her niece to Italy, and had shown herself in no hurry to bring her back, though both Miss Evelyn and Lilian had frequently hinted that they were quite tired of foreign life, and would be very glad to be back again at the old Tower. However, they had now been absent rather more than a year, and Miss Winifred had made up her mind to return home shortly, fearing that the Tower would be quite too damp for habitation if it remained vacant any longer. But she still entertained dark thoughts towards the vicar of All Saints', and had *almost* made up her mind that if he persisted in walking along the Waterton Road, and in lending books to Lilian upon her return home, she would apply to the bishop for his removal. Mr. Auriol, however, being quite unaware of her resolution concerning him, continued to spend part of each day, as a Senior Wrangler should, in mathematically calculating the chances that Miss Raymond would bring her niece home during the course of the summer just commencing, which calculations afforded him a certain satisfaction, incorrect though their result might be.

It was a bright evening in the end of June, and Hazel Ravenstone was wandering up and down among the rose-bushes in her own special rose garden, plucking here and

there one of the sweet, half-open buds or flowers just bursting into full bloom, and arranging them tenderly into a nosegay as she walked. She had altered very little in the two years which had passed since her arrival at Ravenstone ; her figure was a little taller, but the face—with the large, dark, wistful eyes, and sweet, earnest mouth, with its delicately, proudly curved upper-lip—was just the same as ever : attractive and interesting in the eyes of many more people than the face of Hazel the lighthouse-girl had been. The beauty of Sir Reginald Ravenstone's daughter was the talk of the neighbourhood, and people said what a pity it was that he kept her shut up so much, and did not let her go more into society. They said it was too bad that because he did not care for society himself, he should not allow his beautiful daughter to enjoy it, and did not believe Hazel, when she told them she liked to be at home with her father best, and that the quiet days with him alone were her greatest pleasure. But it was quite true. Hazel had lived her lonely lighthouse-life too long to be very easily transformed into a gay, society-loving young lady of fashion, and she enjoyed long rambles with her father over the country, and lonely ones by herself to the top of the hill, where she could see and hear her beloved sea, much more than the dinner or garden parties to which she received far more invitations than she cared to accept. However, there were some pleasant neighbours near Ravenstone, and Hazel was becoming more reconciled to their society by degrees. She had felt terribly shy when she had first mingled amongst them, and had often longed to run away and hide herself among the old Perilpoint rocks, where visitors had seldom troubled her. But, on the whole, she found the life of Miss Ravenstone a very pleasant one ; indeed, in such a lovely home, with such a kind, indulgent father, it could scarcely be otherwise. All the comforts and enjoyments which money could procure were hers, and it was her

delight to carry comfort and pleasure into the poor houses in the village, where she was always a welcome visitor, and was winning stronger love every day, not only for her gifts, but for the sweet face and the loving words which accompanied them. The bunch of lovely roses which she was making-up this bright summer's evening, from her own pet rose-bushes, was for a poor sick girl in the village, to whom Miss Hazel's visits were the only bright spots in a dark, cheerless, loveless life, and in whose eyes she was something not far removed from an angel.

Sir Reginald, stepping out from the library window upon the smooth, velvety lawn, paused to look at the pretty picture of his daughter in her white dress and soft blue wrapper, flitting about among the rose-bushes, and thanked God, as he watched her, for the treasure restored to him after the long dreary years of solitude and misery which had made him an old man before his time. But though the grey hair must remain, and the lines in his face were ineffaceable, the old melancholy expression was gone, and something of the youthful light had come back to Sir Reginald's eyes, and the youthful vigour to his steps. And the hopeless sadness in his deep voice had given place to a happy ring as he spoke to his daughter, and asked for whose benefit she was spoiling her rose garden.

"I am not spoiling it, papa," she answered. "See what a quantity of roses I have! These few will not even be missed. And don't you think the chief pleasure in a garden is in being able to gather the flowers when one likes?"

"I do certainly," answered Sir Reginald. "I was only wondering for whom such a lovely bouquet was destined. It seems to me that it is too good for any of your village pets."

"I don't think it is, papa," said Hazel, smiling. "That poor sick girl whom I took you to see last week will value

it. If I were ill as she is I should like somebody to bring me beautiful flowers. Flowers are like friends, papa ; don't you think so ?"

"*Yours* seem to be at any rate," said Sir Reginald, smiling fondly at his daughter's sparkling face. "I think you spend half your days in this rose garden. How well it has turned out !"

"It is lovely !" said Hazel. "I ought to enjoy it all I can, after the trouble you took to plan it out for me, papa."

"Nothing that gives you pleasure is trouble to me, my child," said Sir Reginald. "When are you going to take your flowers to the village ?"

"I thought I would go after dinner," said Hazel, "and then shall we walk to the top of the hill and look at the sea ?"

"Always the sea !" said Sir Reginald, with a smothered sigh. "Yes, we will walk there if you like. But *my* recollections of the sea are not so pleasant as yours, my child. I can never look at it without thinking of your mother. You are growing so like her, Hazel—more like her every day."

"Am I ?" said Hazel, wistfully. "I am so glad, papa ; I want to be like my mother. We won't go to the hill if you would rather not. I am always forgetting that."

"It does not matter," said Sir Reginald. "I like the sea too, though it is painful to me. We have not been to Pointhaven for some time, my child. Would you like to spend a day at the lighthouse next week ?"

"O yes, papa !" cried Hazel, "very much ! I wonder if Lilian has come home yet. I should like to go and see her too, if she is at home again."

"And Mr. Everard, I suppose ?" said Sir Reginald. "How did he become so poor, Hazel ? Did you ever hear ?"

"No, papa," answered Hazel. "I know he had great

troubles and lost all his money, but I don't know in what way. I should like to know very much. I am so glad he has got St. Mary's organ at last. I believe it was Lilian's brother who persuaded Mr. Stuart to give it to him."

And the thought of Lilian's brother made Hazel sigh involuntarily. She had often wished that he could see her beautiful home at Ravenstone, and that she could hear him play on the new organ which her father had bought for her two years ago—her greatest treasure among all the presents he had given her, and her greatest source of happiness. Besides, she sometimes longed for some *young* companionship; there were plenty of young people whom she met occasionally at friend's houses, and who came to see her sometimes in her own, but there was not one amongst them who was exactly a *real* friend, according to her own understanding of the word. And she had always fancied that Mr. Thursfield could be a more real friend than anybody else, if she could know him well enough, and that his companionship would sometimes be very pleasant when her father was tired or busy, and when she wanted to talk about music or her old lighthouse home, which Mr. Thursfield had liked and appreciated so much. And he had always from the very first seemed to understand her so entirely, sympathise with her so well—better even than her father could do—perhaps only because he was young like herself, and so it was easier to talk to him about some things than even to Sir Reginald. At any rate she felt that she should certainly like to see him again, or at least *hear* something of him. It was more than a year since she had last seen Lilian, and though she had had two or three letters from her, written from abroad, they had told her nothing of Arthur, nor whether the task of which he had spoken to her had yet been accomplished. Hazel wished that she might, with some of her money, help in its accomplishment; but that was impossible, as she did not even know what it was. She

wondered very much whether Lilian would ever tell her; and thinking of Lilian took her thoughts back to Point-haven, and to the visit which her father had just promised that she should pay the following week to all her old friends. She always enjoyed visiting her old home so much, and as she took her walk through the village after dinner to the sick girl's house, her thoughts were full of her "father and mother Manlinson," as she called them,—of the two dear old faces, sadly furrowed and worn in the last two years, which would brighten at the sight of her as nothing else ever made them brighten now.

She gave away her flowers, and sat a little while with the invalid, and was on her way back to the Park, when, as she approached the railings, which divided it from the road at the point furthest from the house, she saw leaning against them a figure which struck her as a familiar one; a rather tall, slight figure, with a head of wavy brown hair. He—for it was the figure of a man—was gazing intently into the Park, at the soft green glades among the trees, lighted up by the evening sun, and the white, picturesquely-built house in the distance, of which just a glimpse was visible through the rich foliage of the grand old oaks and elms, now in their full splendour. He did not appear to hear Hazel's footstep, for he did not turn till she was quite close to him, and then, with a violent start, she recognised Arthur Thursfield! Colouring brightly with pleasure, she held out her hand to him, wondering what had possibly brought him to Ravenstone, and Arthur took it without speaking, for this sudden vision of Sir Reginald Ravenstone's white-robed daughter, instead of the lighthouse-keeper's girl, in her plain, peasant costume, took away his breath, and he could only look at her with dazzled eyes.

It was Hazel who first found voice, and asked him what he was doing at Ravenstone, and how long he had been there.

"I have only been here half-an-hour," he answered, still looking at her in a half-bewildered fashion. "We are doing some work in a parish three or four miles off, and as I have heard a good deal of the beauties of Ravenstone Park while I have been there, I thought I would walk over this lovely evening and take a look at it. So I hope you will forgive me for looking over your railings in such a rude fashion! I was told that this was the best point for obtaining a good view of the Park."

"It is the best point *outside*," said Hazel, smiling; "but you will see it much better if you come *in*. It is such a beautiful home, Mr. Thursfield! I should like you to see it. Papa will be very glad to take you all over the Park; and you shall see my rose garden."

"I shall be intruding, I am afraid," said Arthur, not quite sure that a young organ-builder would be a welcome visitor to the master of Ravenstone. "I had no intention of venturing in, Miss Ravenstone."

"It would have been very unkind of you to go away without coming in," said Hazel, "when I have my beautiful little organ to show you, and have so often wanted you to play it to me. Papa is never busy in the evening. He is waiting at home for me to go for a walk with him, and he will like to walk with you over the Park just as well. You *must* come."

And Arthur followed, not quite sure whether he was dreaming or not, and wondering whether his beautiful companion could be the same Hazel with whom he had looked for seaweeds on the rocks at Perilpoint more than two years and a-half ago. By the time they reached the lodge gates and entered the Park, he had come to the conclusion that she *was* very much the same after all, and that the difference in her dress altered her much less than he had thought at the first moment. For the sweet, wistful face had not changed in the least, except that it had gained

a little new dignity of expression, which only made it more charming, and which well suited the young mistress of Ravenstone. And as she talked to him, and asked him with her old shy, eager interest about his work, he began to recover from his bewilderment, and to feel that she was still the same Hazel as of old, and no fast young lady of fashion, as he had sometimes disconsolately imagined her. Her new riches had not spoiled her—he soon discovered that, and what little change there was in her manner was only graceful and charming. They walked to the house in great contentment, and Arthur was not sorry when Hazel, after leaving him in the drawing-room for a few minutes, came back to tell him that her father was engaged with his steward, who had called unexpectedly, and that she must show him the Park instead, if he did not mind.

“How happy you must be in this beautiful home!” he said, as they strolled through the sunny glades, Arthur much rejoicing in, instead of “minding,” Sir Reginald’s absence. “It is the prettiest place I have ever seen!”

“Do you think so?” said Hazel. “I think it is very beautiful, and I *am* very happy. Papa is so good to me. But when first I came, I missed the sound of the sea so much! I had heard it all my life, and you can’t think how strange my ears felt with no great waves to listen to! I was always listening for them, and disappointed that I could not hear them; it was such a strange feeling.”

“I can imagine it,” said Arthur. “But you are not very far from the sea here. Can you see it anywhere?”

“From the top of that hill,” said Hazel, pointing to her favourite resort. “I often go and sit up there, and look at it. And papa often takes me to Pointhaven, and I spend the day at the lighthouse. That is delightful.”

“What do the Manlinsons do without you?” said Arthur.

“I don’t know,” said Hazel, rather sadly. “I am afraid

they are not *very* happy, poor father—I call him father still—especially. So I like to go and see them as often as I can. Papa would give them a cottage here in the village, if they liked to come and live here, but I don't think they would ever be happy away from the lighthouse. Mr. Thursfield, has Lilian come home yet?"

"She is coming home next week," said Arthur, "and I hope to go and see her on my way back from Ashvale. I have not seen her for more than a year."

Hazel looked up sympathisingly. She thought his face looked tired and pale, and wondered whether his trouble were over yet. She longed to ask him, but did not dare.

"I should think she will be glad to come home," she said. "Papa took me to Germany last year, for six months, and I was glad to come back, though we enjoyed ourselves very much there. He took me because he thought I should learn to speak French and German much quicker by spending a little while abroad; and he wouldn't let me talk a word of English while we were away. I didn't like it much at first, but afterwards I thought it great fun, and I soon got on, and learnt a great deal more than I could have learnt at home."

"And you are as fond of books as ever?" asked Arthur, with a smile. "Do you spend as much time over them as you used to do on those delightful old rocks?"

"Yes, I have been very busy," said Hazel. "I have had such a great deal to learn, and I have still. You see I was so old to begin to be a young lady."

Arthur smiled. "I wonder if you feel very different, now you are Miss Ravenstone!" he said. "I don't think you *seem* so, if that isn't a rude thing to say. I am glad you have not changed very much."

"Are you?" said Hazel, blushing. "I don't think I feel very different, except in *some* ways. I am very happy—really much happier than I used to be, because all those

strange feelings which used to puzzle me are gone. If I could have Perilpoint and the lighthouse quite close to me, where I could see them every day, I think I should be *quite* happy. I long for a scramble over the rocks sometimes, and a good hunt after shells and seaweeds, and all the beautiful things I used to find. But I shall see them all again next week. It is very strange to me to think of my two lives, Mr. Thursfield. It seems wonderful that my own father should have found me at last, after so many years, and that I should have been saved at all from that dreadful shipwreck."

"It is," said Arthur; "but God's ways *are* very wonderful, Miss Ravenstone, though they are sometimes hard to understand—and hard to bear too," he added, with a smothered sigh. "But it is a comfort to know and feel that they are *His* ways, not ours, and that they must be good for us, whether we think so or not. Do you know I had quite made up my mind before I left the lighthouse, nearly three years ago, after my illness, that *something* would happen to you some day, and that you were *not* the daughter of your supposed father and mother at all?"

"Did you think that?" said Hazel. "I did not know you did. What made you think it?"

Arthur smiled. "A good many things," he said. "I didn't tell anybody except Lilian, and I was half afraid to tell her, lest I should be laughed at for my romance."

"And it *wasn't* such a romantic idea after all," said Hazel. "But I didn't know you ever thought anything of that sort. Mr. Thursfield," she added, timidly, "do you mind my having told papa your real name? Lilian told me I might, because I did not like to have secrets from papa. I told him he must never let anybody else know I had told him."

"So she has talked to her father about me," thought Arthur, with a secret feeling of satisfaction. "I do not

mind Sir Reginald's knowing my name," he said. "I am quite sure the secret is safe with him and with you. It is horrid going about under a feigned name. I hate it, but I do it to spare poor Aunt Winifred's feelings."

"Your trouble is not over yet then?" Hazel ventured to ask. "Will it not soon be over, Mr. Thursfield? And can nobody help you to get rid of it?"

"No, it is my work," answered Arthur, sadly. "I cannot ask for help in it, and it will still be a long time before it can be over. I cannot tell you what it is, Miss Ravenstone—I cannot tell any one; but it is my trouble and Lilian's, and we must bear it."

"I am so sorry," murmured Hazel; "I wish I could help you!"

"Your sympathy helps me," answered Arthur, warmly; "I know you are sorry, and I am grateful to you for the kind feeling. But I am selfish enough not to wish to forfeit your friendship, which might be the consequence of your knowing my trouble—if it is not presumptuous in me to talk of friendship between the daughter of Sir Reginald Ravenstone and a hard-working organ-builder."

He smiled as he spoke, but Hazel thought there was a touch of bitterness in his tone, and she looked up at him pleadingly.

"Don't say that," she said. "What does it matter to me? I know very well what you are, Mr. Thursfield, and if you had not been an organ-builder we might never have been friends at all, for I should most likely never have seen you."

"Then I am reconciled," said Arthur, with a smile of gratitude. "But, Miss Ravenstone, I am taking up far too much of your time, I fear. The sun has set, and it is nearly nine o'clock."

"But you have not seen my organ yet," said Hazel, eagerly. "We will go indoors, and you must play it to

me; and then you must have some tea before you go away. This is my rose garden. Do you like roses? May I give you some of them?"

And she gathered some of the loveliest half-opened buds, and put them into his hand.

"They will live longer than the full-blown roses," she said; "and I think they are the prettiest. I am so fond of roses! This is the way to the library, where my organ is. There, isn't it a beauty?"

And she listened entranced, while Arthur drew such beautiful sounds from the exquisite little instrument as Hazel had never heard before but once, and that once from those same fingers long ago at St. Mary's. The room grew dark while Arthur played, and he started up at last, when the footman announced that tea was waiting in the drawing-room, apologising for having played so long.

"This is such a delicious little organ," he said, "that I forgot myself in the pleasure of playing it, and I am afraid I have tired you. You should have told me to stop."

"Tired me!" echoed Hazel, with a half sigh. "I am never tired of my organ, Mr. Thursfield. I wish I could play it as you do, and I wish it was not so late, so that you could play longer. Papa gave it to me soon after I first came here, and I have had lessons and practised a great deal, but I can't make it sound quite as it does when you play it."

"Try," said Arthur, insinuatingly; but Hazel shut it up lovingly, and said she must go and pour out her father's tea. She thought she would not spoil the sound of his music by any of her own.

Sir Reginald was in the drawing-room, and greeted the unexpected guest very kindly, regretting that business had prevented his having the pleasure of showing him the Park and gardens, of which Arthur spoke with a warmth of admiration which could not fail to gratify him.

"You are spending some little time in the neighbourhood?" he said. "Come and see us again, any day next week except Wednesday; that day we have fixed to spend at Pointhaven. Your evenings are free, I suppose?"

"Yes," replied Arthur. "I am always free after six o'clock, and shall be most happy to come. But I had no intention of intruding like this, Sir Reginald; only I was told that I ought not to leave the neighbourhood without seeing Ravenstone."

"I think it is worth seeing, though it is my own," said Sir Reginald, with a smile, "and I am glad you have been able to have a better view than you could obtain from the other side of the railings. I had the pleasure of meeting your sister at Pointhaven last year, before she went abroad, and have heard my daughter mention your name occasionally, so I do not feel that you are quite a stranger. You are a good judge of organs. What do you think of my daughter's?"

Arthur's praises were eloquent, and Hazel listened eagerly while her father inquired about the work in which he was engaged, and was not much less pleased at the interest he showed in it than was Arthur himself, who was surprised at the friendliness which was shown to him by the "proud, haughty" Sir Reginald, who had been described to him. He went away late in the evening, with Hazel's roses in his hand, promising to come again on the following Thursday evening, and walked over the three miles of lovely country road between Ravenstone and Ashvale in a state of dazzled bewilderment—white dresses and wistful eyes, roses and organs, combining to produce a sensation in his brain which was not unpleasant if it was confusing.

"That is a nice young fellow," remarked Sir Reginald, as he bade his daughter good night. "I should like to know what made him take to that business. I should have thought those aunts of his, with their money, might have

brought him up for the church or the law, or something of that sort. He looks fit for something quite different to his present occupation, though it is certainly an interesting one."

"He wanted to make money as quickly as he could, papa," said Hazel. "I don't know what for, but it was for something in which Miss Raymond would not help him, and which he *must* do, he says. And Lilian told me that after he had left school, and was wondering what he could do to make money, he went into a church in London one day, to watch the building of an organ, and the master of the firm, who was there, was so struck with the interest he showed in it, that he asked him laughingly if he would like to enter the business. And he thought it over for a day or two, and then decided that it would suit him better than anything else, so Mr. Woodward agreed to take him at once. He has a very good position now, and is organist of a London church as well, so I suppose he is getting on, but he told me this evening that it will be a long time before his work will be done."

"I should like to know what it is," said Sir Reginald. "He is evidently a clever young fellow, and likes his work, but he is too good for it, and ought to be in a different position. Why could not his aunt give him some money, I wonder, if he wanted it!"

"She never will," said Hazel. "I don't know what he wants it for, but it is for something which his aunt does not approve of. I wish she *would* give him some, for Lilian has told me that he works dreadfully hard, and takes extra work in the evenings, when he is in London, and always lives on as little as he possibly can. I wish you had heard him play my organ, papa; you must hear him next time."

"I heard distant sounds," answered Sir Reginald, with a smile, "and thought I would not disturb them. I

thought the player was a good one. Now go to bed, my child, and don't look distressed over this young man's troubles. Perhaps they are not very serious ones, after all, or perhaps he is partly to blame for them himself."

But Hazel felt quite sure that this was not the case, and went to her room to think joyfully over the two pleasant events which were to take place in the following week—her visit to Perilpoint, and Arthur Thursfield's visit to the Park. How strange it was that his work should have brought him so near to Ravenstone !





CHAPTER XXXIV.

"The simple, silent, selfless man
Is worth a world of tonguesters."

—TENNYSON.

HAZEL met with a warm welcome on the following Wednesday when she visited her old home, not only from the lighthouse-keeper and his wife, but from Jack, and Tom Shipwell, who were spending the day there, Shipwell having returned a few days previously from his voyage to China. Sir Reginald was glad to meet the old sailor, from whom he learnt a few particulars of the voyage which had been fatal to his young wife, as well as to so many other persons. He had often longed to hear them, for the terrible blow had been the more bitter to him, that there had, to his knowledge, been no survivor to bring him any news of the manner of his wife's death, or of her last days of life. Tom Shipwell had only been on board the *Wanderer* a few days, and had seen but little of the beautiful young Mrs. Ravenstone, whose ill-health had confined her almost entirely to her cabin; but he had taken a fancy to the little child constantly about on deck with its nurse, and had frequently carried it about on his broad shoulders, whistling to it the song which had brought such strange vague recollections to Hazel's mind when she had heard it three or four years before.

"The lady came up on deck when the storm came on," he said, "and she wouldn't let the nurse hold the child; she took it up in her own arms and held it, clinging on to the side of the ship as well as she could to the last minute. And then when they said the ship couldn't hold out much longer, she cried out to me, for I wasn't far off, watching the pretty little babe, and thinking I'd save it and its mother if I could, and she put it into my arms and said, 'Save my child. They say a life-boat is coming to help us, but perhaps it won't be in time, and if I die, never mind; only save the child if you can.' She was quite pale and quiet-like, and didn't cry out nor nothing; and I fastened the child on to me, and lashed the lady on to a floating spar. and myself on to another, thinking maybe I could save them both. But the next minute there came a sort of whirlwind, and the ship went right over with all hands on board, and I saw the spar the lady was fastened to carried down along with the rest; then I didn't know what happened, nor how it was I didn't go down too with the little babe. I suppose the bit of wood I was lashed on to got knocked away from the rest somehow, and got clear of the ship. Anyhow it floated ashore at Stonybeach, and we were picked up alive. You know the rest, sir. If I could have saved the lady I'd have done it, sir, but it came so sudden like at the end, and she was swept clean off from me. It was evening too, and getting dark, and that made it worse."

"You did all you could," said Sir Reginald, in a hoarse voice, "and you shall have more proof of my gratitude than I know how to give in words. My child's escape and yours were indeed wonderful, and for the effort you made to save my wife I thank you gratefully. I have long wished to hear something of this, and am thankful to have met you here to-day."

"We wrote to him, sir," said Manlinson, "soon after

you took our Hazel away, thinking maybe you'd like to hear anything he could tell you, but he didn't get the letter. He told us before he went away to write if we wanted him. I never thought then what he meant, nor what we was likely to want him for, that I didn't."

"We none of us ever thought of it," said Jack, following Hazel out on to the rocks to help her to look for treasures—a faithful servant to his beautiful mistress as of old. "And, Hazel—leastways, I mean Miss Ravenstone, only it don't seem natural to say anything but Hazel—I thought I'd like to tell you that I've found out what a mistake it were ever to think of marrying you; you always said it were a mistake, only I didn't believe it—seemed like I couldn't just at first. I'd always thought you'd be my wife, though to be sure I might have known it wasn't likely you would, and you just about an angel alongside of me! And, Hazel, I've been feeling ashamed of myself for ever botherin' you, this more than two year. To think as I had ever asked a girl to be my wife as was a real born lady! That's why I never come to see you before you went away—I felt that vexed and ashamed."

"Why, Jack, you need not have felt so," said Hazel, smiling. "You knew no better then than I did, who I was, and I have never felt angry with you. And now I hope you are going to tell me that you have asked somebody else to be your wife—somebody who will be as good a wife to you as you deserve."

"Why," said Jack, his honest face reddening, "I *have* been thinking—I thought a good while ago as it wasn't no good to be a lone fellow all my days, just because I'd made a mistake and asked for a wife as I couldn't get, and who never was such as a poor fellow like me ought to have thought on; and so I'm thinking of marrying pretty soon. There's a real nice girl at Marston Ferry, who's promised to be my wife, and it won't be long afore we settle, only I thought

I'd like to tell you about it, Miss Hazel, and ask you to forgive me for——"

"For nothing," said Hazel, laying her hand on his arm gently, and smiling kindly at him. "I'm very glad to hear this, Jack, and I shall come to your wedding whenever it is to be. You must be sure to let me know; and I shall look out for the prettiest wedding present I can find for you and your wife."

"Will you come?" said Jack, beaming with pleasure. "I've told her all about you, Miss Hazel, and she wants to see you just about. She'll make a right good wife, I know that, and I'm glad you don't think anything the worse of me; for you see it was just a mistake."

"Yes, I know," said Hazel, "and I am very glad you have found it out and put it right, Jack."

"I don't care for you none the less, you know," said Jack, reverentially, "only it's different. I know as I'd have been a worse fellow than I am if it hadn't been for you, Hazel. And if you'll think kindly of me sometimes, for the sake of old times——"

"I shall often think of you," said Hazel, "and come and see you too when you are married, I hope. Shake hands, Jack, and if you like to bring your wife to Ravenstone some day when you want a holiday, I will show you my beautiful new home. I know you would like to see it."

Which invitation sent Jack home radiant, with every drawback to his happiness with his rosy-cheeked sweetheart removed from his mind. The wedding took place a month after, and Hazel sent to the happy pair as her present the prettiest cottage tea-service she could find in Pointhaven, together with many more trifles, to add to the comfort of their new home. Tom Shipwell refused the handsome reward which Sir Reginald wished at once to give him for having saved his daughter's life, but accepted gratefully the offer of a comfortable pension, to be settled upon him as

soon as he chose to give up his seafaring life. This he was not yet prepared to do, and before Jack's marriage he had started out again for another long voyage : this time to South America.

Meanwhile, Arthur Thursfield had returned to London in a dream of happiness, for Sir Reginald had, when he spent his second evening at the Park, asked him to come down with his sister to Ravenstone to spend his holiday, whenever he was able to take it. And as Miss Raymond, after much demurring, had allowed Lilian to accept the invitation, Arthur was only too happy to do the same, urged not less by the pleasant prospect of a fortnight or so of his sister's society, than by the wistful pair of eyes which had mutely showed their approbation of Sir Reginald's proposal, and their desire that Arthur should accede to it. The vision of those eyes, and of the white-robed form to which they belonged, followed Arthur to his humble lodgings, and came between him and his work more often than was quite convenient for his peace of mind. He doubted occasionally whether it had been quite wise in him, a humble young organ-builder, to accept an invitation to the fascinating abode of Sir Reginald Ravenstone of Ravenstone. Having once got away from it, and plunged again into the hard, every-day business of life, would it not have been better to forget the existence of rose gardens, and the witcheries of twilight organ-music, and wistful dark eyes? But at any rate he *had* accepted the invitation, and he could not draw back from it ; and he need never go again, if he found that *this* visit unsettled him. So he put away his scruples, and set himself to work with double energy, in order that the expected period of dissipation might the sooner arrive and be got over.

Lilian, troubled with no such scruples, looked forward to it with unmixed feelings of delight, rejoicing in the thought that she and Arthur would enjoy a longer uninterrupted

time together than they had had since his illness at the lighthouse. Miss Raymond had consented very unwillingly to her going, and declared, as soon as she heard of the arrangement, that Sir Reginald had lowered himself infinitely in her estimation, by actually inviting an organ-maker to his house to associate on friendly terms for some weeks with himself and his daughter! The world was clearly coming to a bad end, when such confusion of society was allowed by one who *might* have been supposed to take a very different position in it. But all men were alike, and it was Miss Raymond's firm belief that they grew more and more untrustworthy as time went on. The fact was that she felt thoroughly disconcerted and angry at the calm manner in which Mr. Auriol contrived to foil all her attempts to keep him from meeting her niece in the town or on the beach, if she ever walked out alone or with Miss Evelyn, and at the total disregard he persisted in showing to her wishes, that he should avoid the Waterton Road when he walked abroad, and desist from recommending to Lilian books, which she could only, or most conveniently, obtain from his own library. But Mr. Auriol, shy man as he was in ladies' society generally, showed himself quite equal to a contest with the most dreaded individual of that sex in Pointhaven. Miss Winfred's sharp tongue appeared to have no effect upon *him*, and her scornful utterances appeared to fall upon his ears with honeyed sweetness, if one might judge from the imperturbable and pleasant demeanour with which he received them. The vicar had, to use the expression of certain watchful persons in the town, been "going" fast, and the news of his engagement to Miss Thursfield was quite expected by them to be the next public news of Pointhaven. And as Miss Thursfield had now passed her twenty-first birthday, the certain opposition of her aunt was considered to be worse than useless.

Pointhaven did not know, however, that even her aunt's opposition to the happiness which she knew she *might* possess was not such a formidable obstacle as the sad secret which she guarded so jealously in her own breast. It was in the beginning of September that Arthur obtained a month's leave of absence from his work, and on a warm, bright afternoon arrived at Pointhaven station, where Lilian was to meet him. To avoid exciting the suspicion of the railway officials, which was Miss Raymond's great dread, Arthur had arranged to watch on the platform for Lilian's arrival, and when she had chosen a carriage as *empty* as possible, to follow her quietly to it at the last moment, and take no notice of her until quite clear of the station. He was rather surprised, after some minutes' vain search for her in the crowd, to catch sight of her at last in the company, not of Miss Winifred or Miss Evelyn, as he had expected, but of a tall, fair-haired clergyman, upon whose arm she was leaning in what Arthur considered a "decidedly affectionate manner." He watched with great interest while the gentleman put her into a carriage, and stood talking to her for some moments before wishing her good-bye, and thought it quite an unnecessary length of time that he retained his sister's hand. When at last he retired to a distance, Arthur sprang forward, and took his seat in the carriage at the corner furthest from Lilian, though finding no other occupants, he gave her hand a brotherly squeeze as he passed her.

"Now we are safe!" he said, laughing, when the train had left the station, with its many pairs of inquisitive eyes, at some distance behind. "And now, before we talk on any other subject, Lily, will you please satisfy my curiosity about that tall individual who parted from you so reluctantly just now? Is it the Mr. Auriol of whom I have heard occasionally, and who called to see me one day with Mr. Stuart when I was at the lighthouse?"

"It was Mr. Auriol," said Lilian, a crimson blush suffusing her fair face. And, nestling close to her brother, she stole her hand in his and whispered, "Arthur, it was only settled three days ago, and as I was so soon going to see you, I did not write about it. I am engaged to Mr. Auriol."

"I knew you would be some day," said Arthur, triumphantly. "I have felt it in the air ever since you told me of Aunt Winifred's dislike to him. I am very glad, Lily, for I liked him that day at the lighthouse. But how have you managed it? What does Aunt Winifred say?"

"I can't remember all she has said," answered Lilian, with a smile. "She has said so much—to me at least, not to Mr. Auriol, for I don't know how it is, but he has a wonderful way of getting over Aunt Winifred, and putting all she was intending to say to him out of her head. And now that she finds it is quite useless to fight with him, I believe she is secretly very glad about it, though nothing will make her say so. She lectures me regularly every day about the instability of mankind, but she has confessed that she thinks Mr. Auriol a better specimen of the race than many; she likes him because he is what she calls 'sedate and well-behaved' in society; and does not spend his time in chatting and flirting with all the young ladies, but keeps to his own masculine companions. But, Arthur, he is really very good, so good that she cannot help liking him. And I am very, very happy—almost too happy to believe that it is all true."

"I am very glad," said Arthur, warmly. "But, Lilian," and an anxious look came over his face, "does he know anything? Have you told him? What would he say if he knew?"

"He is so good," said Lilian, her face flushing with pride in her lover. "I told him that I had a secret—a secret which might make him dislike me, and be ashamed of me if

he knew it, and that I could not tell him yet what it was ; and I told him I could not be his wife with that secret between us, I thought it would not be fair to him, and yet I could not—I can't yet make up my mind to tell it to him. And it troubled me very much ; I did not know what to do. But he would not listen to a word I said about giving him up ; he said he was quite willing not to know what the secret was till I liked to tell him, and that even when we married he would not ask me what it was until I wished him to know. And that nothing could ever make him ashamed of me. And, Arthur, he said it would make him so unhappy if I refused to have anything to do with him just because of this secret, that I could not hold out any longer. He wouldn't let me."

"That is good of him," said Arthur. "If anybody did visit *his* disgrace upon you, Lily, it would be a shame to them ! Yet I know it is the way of the world to do such things, and I am glad Mr. Auriol can see that you are worth taking for *yourself*, and that he doesn't care about anything else. But, Lily, I don't suppose he has the least idea what the secret is. I wonder if it wouldn't be better for you to tell him at once ? I shouldn't mind, for of course it would be safe with him, and it might be better."

Lilian shook her head sadly.

"That is what I thought," she said, "but Aunt Winifred won't hear of it. She says Mr. Auriol shall have nothing to do with me unless he will be content to take me, secret and all ; and that men have no right to wish or expect to know things which their wives do not choose to tell them. So I think as Harry ~~is~~ content without knowing, I had better not tell him at present, for the sake of keeping the peace. He has raised Aunt Winifred's opinion of him very much by his want of curiosity, and because he is so good as to care for *me* just as I am, without

troubling about other things. It is good of him, isn't it, Arthur?"

"I don't know," said Arthur, smiling, as he kissed the bright face which his sister turned towards him. "It isn't more than he *ought* to do, in my opinion. What about me, Lily? Does he know you have a brother?"

"Yes, I told him that," answered Lilian. "I wanted to talk to him about you so much, and I couldn't help telling him that! It is dreadfully awkward having secrets, Arthur! Aunt Winifred scolded me for telling him, and declared the news would soon be all over Pointhaven, just as if he would tell! I wish she would trust people—men I mean."

"I think it is wonderful that she has allowed you to be engaged at all," said Arthur, laughing. "Is the wedding to be soon, Lily?"

"I don't know," she answered, blushing, "It is rather early to think about that, when we have only been engaged three days! It won't be just yet. But, Arthur, I hope—I should like it to be before very long, because when we are married, you can come and stay with us whenever you have a holiday, and that will be delightful! You will have a home again at last. I cannot help thinking about that."

"That will be pleasant," said Arthur, with a half sigh. "Are you going to tell this grand piece of news to Hazel?"

"I suppose so," answered Lilian, with a happy smile. "She will like to know. Nobody knows it yet except you and the aunts. What a delightful plan this is of Sir Reginald's! He must have taken quite a fancy to you, Arthur, to invite you to stay at his house after such a short acquaintance!"

"I don't know," said Arthur, his face flushing slightly. "He is very kind. But you see I am only an organ-builder; perhaps if I were anything else—a gentleman at

large—he would not be so kind. As it is, I suppose he doesn't think——”

“What?” asked Lilian, as he hesitated.

“Never mind,” answered Arthur, a troubled expression crossing his face. “I don't want to get into a bad temper, so we will talk of something else. We will go back to Mr. Auriol.”

But as Lilian's communications on that point were strictly confidential, we must not listen to any more of them. Fortunately the carriage remained empty throughout the journey, so there was no interruption to their conversation until the train reached Ravenstone, where Lilian and her brother found a carriage waiting to convey them to the Park, a mile distant.





CHAPTER XXXV.

"Imprison'd is he, say you !

Ay, my good lord. I'll pay the debt and free him."

—*Timon of Athens.*



WEEK of the young Thursfields' visit to Ravenstone Park rolled by in uninterrupted happiness to all parties concerned. There was no limit to Sir Reginald's kindness and thoughtful consideration for his guests, and Hazel's only thought was to devise fresh pleasures for them, and make them, for a short time at least, forget their trouble.

To Arthur, the organ in the library and Hazel herself were pleasure enough. To be in her society, to talk with her and hear her sing, or even to watch her from a distance, as she and Lilian flitted through the garden and Park together, was bliss to him—a deeper bliss than he was at first quite aware of. It was not till several days had passed that he began to realise how tightly the sweet cords had wound round him, or how painful it would now be to break through them. For break them he felt he must. What use was it for him, an organ-builder, obliged to scrape and save every penny, to think of anything deeper than ordinary friendship with the lovely daughter of Sir Reginald Ravenstone of Ravenstone ! It was madness to think of such a thing, and why could he not be content

with the sweet friendship which Hazel gave him—which she acknowledged she felt for him? Yet he could not; he had spent that one week of intoxicating happiness, thinking of nothing further than of each day as it passed, and it was with a sudden start that he woke at last to a knowledge of his own feelings, and to the unpleasant recollection of his own position and circumstances, as compared with those of the girl whom he had grown unconsciously to love with a depth of affection not easily conquered—impossible to conquer, he said to himself, despairingly. He had not meant to love her, he told himself, deeply interested in her as he had always been. He had not meant to love anybody while that unhappy secret still oppressed him, and while his work was still unfulfilled; but that he *did* love her was only too certain a fact, and he blamed himself severely for his want of strength of mind in allowing this only *too* beautiful dream to turn his head before he was aware of it. He came downstairs one morning, looking so pale and unhappy, after a sleepless night of worrying thoughts, that both his sister and Hazel noticed his appearance, and wondered what was the matter with him. Lilian followed him into the garden after breakfast, while the young mistress of Ravenstone was giving her orders for the day, and anxiously asked him if he were ill or what was troubling him.

"Lily," he said, with a desperate effort, "the fact is that I am too happy here. This lovely place—and—everything is turning my head, and I am beginning to think I was a fool for coming, and had much better have kept to the 'low stratum of society,' to which, Aunt Winifred says, I have brought myself."

"Why, Arthur, what is the matter?" cried Lilian. "When Sir Reginald is so kind to you, and treats you just as he would treat any guest! He knows very well that you are *really* just as good as he is himself, in spite

of your business, and that there is a special reason for you being what you are. I am quite sure that neither he nor Hazel think that you belong to that 'low stratum,' or ought to keep to it. Nobody who knows you at all can think so, Arthur."

"It isn't that," answered Arthur. "I know he doesn't think any the worse of me because I am an organ-builder, and that there is no patronising superiority in his kindness. But I feel as if I am in a false position here, Lilian. Sir Reginald has not the least idea *what* my reason is for being what I am, and for saving and scraping as I do; and I can't help feeling that if he *did* know, he might not be so glad to have me here associating every day with his daughter, and that he might feel very vexed at having ever asked me here, and accuse me of coming under false pretences. I can't help feeling this, Lily, and I feel it all the more because I know I take a great deal more interest in Hazel than I have any business to do, and that perhaps she takes an interest in me which she might not do, and which her father might be angry at her doing, if she knew—if they both knew."

Lilian looked anxiously into her brother's face.

"I see what you mean," she said; "but Arthur, in that case the same thing applies to me. Sir Reginald might in the same way disapprove of my being Hazel's friend any longer."

"No, it is a little different," said Arthur. "You are Miss Thursfield of Pointhaven Tower, and are in a different position to me. You are not connected quite in the same way as I am with——"

He broke off and sighed heavily.

"Arthur, dear," said Lilian, "you know what Mr. Auriol said—that no shame or disgrace connected with any friend of mine could alter his feelings for me. If Sir Reginald and Hazel are *true* friends to you, they would only honour

you and care for you the more if they knew your secret, and I believe they *are* true friends; I am sure they are."

"If friendship were enough, I shouldn't care so much," said Arthur, in a low, excited voice. "But, Lilian, I can't stay here, and only feel *friendship* for Hazel. There—I have told you now; but I dare say you have guessed it before. I have been thinking of her a great deal more than I had any business to do, and have let myself live on in a dream of happiness all these days, without thinking of the consequences."

"I think Hazel has been happy too," said Lilian, smiling. "Don't you think so yourself, Arthur?"

"I know she has," he answered, his face flushing, "I know she likes to call me her friend and to have me here, perhaps, more than she would ever have done if she had known. At any rate, if knowing would not lessen her friendship, it might change her feelings towards me, and make it a different kind of friendship. And I feel as if it would be only right to go on staying here if I told her father everything. Then if they *were* ashamed of me, I could go away at once, before I get more out of my senses than I am now."

"Then tell them," said Lilian, decidedly. "Never mind what Aunt Winifred or anybody else might say. Tell them as soon as you like, and prove whether their friendship is worth having or not. Aunt Winifred need not know, at least not now, that you have told them, and if she did know and were angry, it would not matter. You have the right to tell if you choose. I would rather you did too. It would be more comfortable for us all."

"It isn't that I think their friendship would alter exactly," said Arthur. "I don't believe—I am quite sure that Hazel would think no worse of me than she does now. She is so good and so true-hearted, I think she would only be sorry and troubled about it. But I am not so sure about

Sir Reginald. He is proud, you know, and perhaps it has never entered his head that an organ-builder should dare to fall in love with his daughter ; and if he *were* to find it out, and to know also what I should like him to know, he might forbid me the house, and that is where my courage fails me. But, Lily, I *will* tell. I will tell Hazel first, and she will give me courage to tell her father. And if she can never be *more* than a friend to me—well, she may not wish to be, or have any thought of being anything more—I must be content. It would be better than nothing: I could not even *try* to win her love under any sort of false pretence. I would rather she knew the truth at once.”

“I don’t know what her feelings are for you exactly, Arthur,” said Lilian ; “but I am quite sure that the knowledge of our secret would never alter them ; she would only respect and care for you ten times more by knowing how nobly you have denied yourself all these years, and how hard you have worked with no thanks to encourage you.”

Arthur pressed his sister’s hand without speaking, and she returned to the house, while he sprang down the green slope for a solitary walk among the willows by the side of the river, feeling unable just then to see or speak to any one.

“What is the matter with your brother, Lilian ?” asked Hazel, anxiously, meeting her in the hall.

“He is troubled about something,” answered Lilian. “Ask him to tell you what it is himself, Hazel. I think it would comfort him to tell you what it is that worries him.”

“Would it ?” said Hazel, wistfully. “Then I will ask him, if you think he would not be angry with me. I wanted you and him to forget all your troubles, Lilian, while you were here.”

“You have done your best to make us forget them, dear

Hazel," said Lilian, affectionately. "And I think we have tried to do it ourselves. This has been the happiest week we have spent for a long time."

"I am very glad," said Hazel. "Are you going to the drawing-room? I will come soon; I am just going to gather some flowers—some of my beautiful late roses."

And putting on her broad-brimmed garden hat, she ran across the lawn to her rose garden, which sloped down to the river beside which Arthur was walking. She did not see him, but he saw her after a few minutes, and that she was alone, and thought it would be a good opportunity of telling her what was on his mind. So he turned back and entered the rose garden, where he found her on a rustic seat near the water, arranging her flowers, looking, as Arthur thought, unhappily for his self-possession, only more fair and sweet than ever.

"Come and rest, Mr. Thursfield," she said, "and let me show you these fresh roses. Are not these creamy buds beautiful?"

"Very," said Arthur, dreamily, a strange scene of fascination stealing over his senses. "I think everything is beautiful at Ravenstone—too beautiful!"

"Why do you say that?" asked Hazel, gently. "Lilian says you are troubled about something, Mr. Thursfield. Is it about anything that papa could help you in? Won't you tell him what it is, and let him try?"

"I would rather tell you," said Arthur; "at least, I should like to tell you first, Miss Ravenstone. I am too happy here, that is the truth. I am happier than is good for me."

"That is only your imagination," said Hazel, with a smile. "I think it is good for you to be as happy as possible."

"No it isn't," said Arthur, impetuously; "too much happiness only unfits me for my work and makes me

discontented. My path in life is different to *your* bright path, Hazel—I mean Miss Ravenstone. And I have been so happy all this week that I have been forgetting what separates it from yours—what makes it foolish of me to *let* myself be so happy.”

“Do you mean your business?” asked Hazel, timidly, “because if you do, you are quite mistaken. Papa and I don’t mind what you are, Mr. Thursfield. We think just as much of you as if you were rich, and had no work to do—*more*, because we know you have a good reason for working as you do.”

“You do not know what the reason is, though,” said Arthur, in a troubled voice. “And that is what I want to tell you, because I don’t feel that I ought to stay here and be Sir Reginald’s guest, when he has no idea of my secret. So I am going to tell it to you, and afterwards to him, that you may send me away if you don’t like to have anything more to do with me.”

Hazel looked at him incredulously.

“I don’t mind what it is,” she said. “I know it is nothing that will make me think any worse of you, nor papa either. But if it will be a comfort to you to tell us, please do, if Lilian does not mind.”

“She has spoken to you about our mother, I think,” said Arthur, “but never of our father. Have you wondered why, Miss Ravenstone? You have thought that he has been dead some years, have you not?”

“Yes,” answered Hazel, wonderingly; “that is what I always thought. I have often wondered why Lilian has never mentioned his name to me, but I supposed that it was that he had died a good many years ago, before your mother.”

“He is still living,” said Arthur, slowly. “He is in prison, Miss Ravenstone, for debt. He has been there for several years.”

"And you are working to pay the debt and free him?" cried Hazel, her dark eyes lighting up with enthusiasm. "Oh, Mr. Thursfield! And you think *that* can make us ashamed of you, and send you away from us! I am only so sorry, so very sorry for you! and so glad to think you are even more good than I thought you were," she added, laying her hand on his arm.

"It is for my father," said Arthur, looking at her with grateful eyes, and speaking in a low, agitated voice. "It is only my duty to free him if I can. He has done very wrong. I never speak of it to anyone, but I will tell you the truth. He was a captain, you know, in the —th Hussars, and was extravagant. He always lived beyond his means, and had fast companions who encouraged him to do so. He never did anything *wicked*—I mean he never committed any crime; his sin was weakness and carelessness about money matters, and reckless extravagance, and that led him to what was worse. He borrowed large sums of money to get himself out of his difficulties, and never paid them back; and at last his creditor, when he found that there was no chance of his ever returning the money, and that he made no effort to do so, refused to lend him any more, and brought him to trial for the large amount which he owed him. It was a very large sum, and my father was imprisoned until the debt should be paid. I fear that he owes money to others as well, but he will not tell me, and I cannot find out. It was only for this one debt to a Mr. Ratcliffe that he was imprisoned, and if there are others, I hope they are very much smaller ones."

"And you have the whole of this large sum to make up?" said Hazel. "Will nobody help you, Mr. Thursfield—not your aunts, who are so well off?"

"My Aunt Evelyn does help a little, unknown to my Aunt Winifred," said Arthur, "and Lilian helps too as much as she can in the same manner. My Aunt Winifred

will not do anything in the matter, and of course I cannot urge her to do so. She is too angry and indignant with my father for his reckless course, and for breaking my mother's heart, as she says, to have anything further to do with him, and she always tells me that he is in the place which is best for him; that he would be sure to get into trouble again if he were set free. But I determined as soon as I heard where he was—at the time of my leaving school—that I would free him, and as soon as possible, and it was for that reason I accepted Mr. Woodward's offer to take me into his business, for which I felt I had some talent."

"It was noble of you!" said Hazel, her eyes filling with tears. "Will you tell me how much the debt was, and whether you have very much more to earn to make it up?"

Arthur named the sum, and added—"A few years more—three or four, perhaps, or less, if I am moved up to a higher position, as I hope to be before long—will clear it off. You know I am an organist now, and that has helped me very much the last two or three years. It will be such a relief when the work is done at last! And I cannot help feeling that when it *is* done, and he is free, he will be different. We pray for it, and though my Aunt Winifred declares it to be an utterly hopeless wish, we both feel that our prayers *will* be answered."

"I am sure they will," said Hazel. "But do you mean that he does not thank you for what you are doing for him, and think it noble and good of you to undertake to pay such a debt?"

"I have had no thanks yet," said Arthur, sadly, "and that is what has made it so much harder all these years; but I believe they will come some day, and that Aunt Winifred will feel some day also that I have not been fighting against her all the time just for a piece of romantic

folly, and for the sake of aggravating her, as she has sometimes told me."

"Why has this been troubling you so?" asked Hazel, in a low voice, which trembled with sympathy. "Why did you think that our knowing this secret could alter our friendship for you, Mr. Thursfield? Could you not trust papa and me better than that? Could you not believe that we should only feel all the more proud to be your friends, and all the more glad to have you with us, and to try to make you happy—you and Lilian, too? Papa will be sorry, just as I am, but how can this make either of us ashamed of you?"

"Some people would be," answered Arthur, his face flushing. "Forgive me if I have done wrong to *your* kind hearts by doubting you and Sir Reginald. You don't yet know quite all my reasons for wishing to explain this, and for dreading what you *might* think of the disclosure."

He hesitated, and Hazel looked at him inquiringly.

"When my work is done," he went on, hurriedly, "I shall still be in the same position as I am now, or almost the same. My savings will be gone, and I must then go on with my work both for my own and my father's support, and shall have no hope for years more of gaining any different position. I am not ashamed of my work. I like it, and enjoy it, but I know that it places me in a very different position to that of my friends—a very different one to yours, Miss Ravenstone."

"That is nothing," said Hazel, quickly. "We are not ashamed of it, so please do not think of that. We are glad to call you our friend, whatever you are, and we should not mind what people said—people who did not understand the reason for your work. If they looked down on you we would have nothing to do with them."

"You are very good and kind," said Arthur, eagerly, "but, Miss Ravenstone, unfortunately the friendship which

I value so much won't content me. You must forgive me for having allowed the interest I felt in Hazel, the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, to grow into a deeper interest than I can now control. I did not mean that it should, but I cannot help it. As I said before, I have been too happy here, and have shut my eyes to the danger I was running into. Hazel, I cannot help myself. I have been very foolish, with my hopeless prospects; but we may be friends still, may we not? Sir Reginald will not send me away and never let me see you again? If it would be any good, I would go away myself at once, but I know it would not and I am not brave enough; I cannot go! I want you to forgive me, and then to forget what I have said, and to let me be your friend still, if you can, after all I have told you."

Hazel's eyes were filled with tears, and when she saw the tears in his own she could hardly trust herself to speak. She put her hand in his, murmuring, "What have I to forgive? We will always be friends, Arthur, and you must not go away. You have been here such a little while yet, and we are so happy! Let us be happy still; and if we can never be anything *but* friends to each other, that is better than nothing."

"Thank you," said Arthur, in a low voice, holding her hand tightly in his own. "We *will* be happy, and I will not trouble you, Hazel. I could say much more than I have said, but you know why I dare not—why I cannot say more."

"Let *me* tell papa about Captain Thursfield," said Hazel, when she had checked the tears which would for a few minutes have their way; "let me tell him myself. And about this other thing that you have told me—I think you had better not say anything, please, Mr. Thursfield. It might trouble papa a little—and——"

"As we are going to be friends there is nothing to tell,

is there?" said Arthur, with a half-sad smile. "We are not concealing anything. I know only too well how hopeless it is, and I have only told you what I have for my own comfort, and that you may understand."

"I know," said Hazel; "and I do not think that any one else need know what you have said. Papa might think we were unhappy, and I can't bear that he should think so. He is so good to me! I am going to tell him now about your father; may I?"

And receiving Arthur's permission, she returned to the house, where she first shut herself up in her own room, and gave way to a violent burst of tears. Arthur Thursfield's love was so sweet to her!—so sweet that it was no less hard for her than for him, to know that it must be a hidden love for years to come—that he could not marry, or allow himself to think of marrying, till his father was free, and not even *then*, for Captain Thursfield was in very ill health, and would never be able to support himself again. It was very hard, Hazel said to herself, that all this burden should rest on Arthur's shoulders—that the rich aunt, who could so easily have helped him, would not even give him a kind word to encourage him in his self-denying task. Hazel knew also that Sir Reginald, with all his respect and liking for Arthur, looked far higher than to *him* for a husband for his daughter, and would be very much troubled, if not displeased, at the notion of an attachment of that kind between herself and one who, though by birth and education a gentleman quite as much as her father himself, was only an organ-builder by profession.

"Papa will help Mr. Thursfield," she said to herself, as she went downstairs at last, to look for Sir Reginald. "He likes him so much, and has such a high opinion of him, that I know he will help him if he can. And then perhaps——"

Hazel entered the library, and drawing a stool to her

father's feet, seated herself upon it, and took his hand in hers.

"Papa," she said, "Mr. Thursfield has been telling me this morning what the secret is which he has been working so long to remove, and he said that I might come and tell you about it. He meant to come himself, but I asked him to let me. He thinks you ought to know, because it troubles him very much to think that he is your guest, and that you have been kind to him, not knowing what, he fancies, might alter your feelings about him. Papa, his father, Captain Thursfield, is in prison for debt—a very heavy debt, which Mr. Thursfield is paying off for him. He—Captain Thursfield—was very extravagant and reckless about money, and had some bad companions who encouraged him in doing wrong, and he got into difficulties, and then borrowed large sums of money to free himself, which he never repaid. And Mr. Ratcliffe, the friend of whom he borrowed them, brought him to trial at last, and he has been in prison for several years. Mr. Thursfield has saved a great part of the sum, but he says it will take him about three or four years more to get enough to pay it all."

"And what is Captain Thursfield going to do when he is free?" asked Sir Reginald. "I should fear he is likely only to bring more troubles upon his son."

"He is ill," said Hazel, "and Mr. Thursfield will have to support him himself. He does not seem to feel a bit thankful to him for what he is doing, but Mr. Thursfield is hoping that when once he is free he will be different to what he is now, and will be sorry for what he has done. Isn't it dreadful, papa, for him and for poor Lilian? *She* helps Arthur all she can, but of course it takes them a very long time to make up the money. I know he saves up every penny he can spare, for Lilian told me so, before I knew what it was for."

"He is a noble fellow!" said Sir Reginald, "and I shall

tell him so. So that is why he gave up the university, and took to this business. And when he has freed his father, he will have to begin all over again, I suppose, to save for himself. Though I have no doubt that by that time he will be in a higher position than at present, and may receive a very good salary ; yet he is fit for something very different, and ought not to be in his present position at all. Hazel, I have more money than I want ; I will pay the debt and free this Captain Thursfield."

"Oh, papa!" cried Hazel, clasping her hands, "will you? Do you really mean it? How good of you, papa! I do think you could not do anything better with your money."

"I think so too," said Sir Reginald, with a smile. "I will do it. Where is the young fellow? He has some pride, I believe, for which I don't blame him, for I have some myself, but I will manage this so that he shall not find it out. Find him and send him to me, my child ; I should like a little talk with him."

Hazel threw her arms round her father's neck, and rushed away. Arthur and Lilian were together in the garden, and while Arthur was having his talk with Sir Reginald in the library, Hazel and Lilian had theirs out of doors, and Hazel learnt much more of Arthur's self-denial, and of the difficulties which his aunt's opposition to his work had placed in his way, than he had let her know himself. She met him alone in the hall, as the luncheon bell sounded, and he held out his hand to her, saying in a low voice—

"Sir Reginald is very good, Miss Ravenstone."

"He isn't ashamed of you, is he?" said Hazel, with a wistful smile. "How could you think such things of him, Mr. Thursfield? He was pleased to have you for his guest before, and he is proud now."

Arthur wrung her hand in reply, and it was evident to Hazel, from his brighter face, that the interview had been a

satisfactory one. Her father called her aside when lunch was over, and said—

“I have made my plans, Hazel, and this debt shall be paid off without delay, and without young Thursfield being any the wiser as to the sender of the money. I have asked a few particulars about the amount still needed, and ascertained the whereabouts of this Mr. Ratcliffe, and shall settle the matter with him as soon as possible after Mr. Thursfield’s return to London. I think it can be managed without allowing him to have any suspicion of *my* paying the money. He will then merely have to forward his own savings, and the matter will be ended. I would pay the whole, but that would scarcely do. The young fellow would rather liberate his father himself, which is natural enough. Captain Thursfield shall be free, for his noble son’s sake, in a few weeks.”

The remainder of Arthur’s and Lilian’s visit flew by only too rapidly. If Sir Reginald guessed anything of his young visitor’s feelings towards his daughter, he was careful to keep his suspicions to himself, and Arthur was scrupulously careful on his part not to trespass beyond the bounds of *friendship* with the beautiful girl whom he loved more deeply every day, but loved, as he thought, so hopelessly. Hazel looked forward to the paying off of the debt with an eagerness and a wild hope which she vainly tried to struggle against. Arthur would still be only the young organ-builder, without position and without fortune; but the fact that her father had been so ready to pay the debt, and had been so enthusiastic in praise of Arthur’s conduct ever since he had known his secret, surely showed that he could take no ordinary interest in him. And perhaps he might help him in some other way when his father was free, which would make a possibility of that which she knew was Arthur’s dearest but most despairing hope. How far it was her own hope she did not dare to think.



CHAPTER XXXVI.

"What, are my deeds forgot?
Sure hath my lord a wallet at his back
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion."

—*Troilus and Cressida.*

"I do proclaim
One honest man—mistake me not—but one."

—*Timon of Athens.*

WHETHER the fact that her nephew had been spending a month as the guest of Sir Reginald Ravenstone of Ravenstone roused a little feeling of respect for him in Miss Raymond's mind, or whether a latent feeling of affection prompted her, she certainly astonished both Arthur and Lilian very much by appearing on the platform of the Point-haven station just as they alighted from the train which had brought them from Ravenstone one afternoon in the first week of October. Lilian went forward at once to meet her aunt, leaving Arthur to follow at a distance, and was speedily consigned to the care of Mr. Auriol, who had been waiting for her a little way off, while Miss Winifred returned to the spot where Arthur was standing, waiting to see whether his aunt intended to take any notice of him.

"Now your sister is out of the way, I have come to say a few words to you, Arthur," she said. "I have sent her home with Mr. Auriol, in order that you may not be seen

with her, and have promised her that you shall call at the Tower after dark this evening to wish her good-bye. Mr. Everard wishes to see you, so you may as well spend the intervening hour or two with him."

"It is kind of you to come and meet us, Aunt Winifred," said Arthur. "I did not expect to find you here. You are quite well, I hope, and Aunt Evelyn?"

"We are both in excellent health," said Miss Winifred. "I cannot say that *you* look as if your visit to Ravenstone had benefited you. Lilian is looking extremely well, but you have evidently worn yourself out with the gaiety and excitement of fashionable life."

"Do I look so dissipated?" asked Arthur, with an amused smile. "Ravenstone is a very quiet place, Aunt Winifred, and I have seen very little 'gaiety,' as you call it."

"Then I suppose you have been falling in love with Sir Reginald's daughter," said Miss Raymond, who evidently saw something unwonted in her nephew's appearance. "Such an act of folly would only be in keeping with the rest of your romantic ideas. And I suppose a poor organ-mender is not exactly the husband the girl fancies—or that her father fancies for her. Things are changed now, Arthur, and the lighthouse girl who was ready enough to court a gentleman's notice, can afford to turn up her nose at him now she is Miss Ravenstone of Ravenstone."

"Aunt Winifred!" cried Arthur, "you are entirely mistaken in supposing that Hazel ever courted my notice when she was the supposed daughter of the Manlinsons, or that she now looks down upon one who has been her father's guest. We will not talk of her, please. I am glad you think Lilian looking well. I think her visit has done her good, and it has been a most happy one to both of us. I dare say, however," he added, smiling, "she is not sorry to come back to Pointhaven for *some* reasons."

An evident expression of satisfaction was upon Miss Raymond's face as she answered—

"Lilian is a good girl, Arthur ; she has always been so, and as she has chosen to place her affections in Mr. Auriol's hands, I have raised no objection to the match, for I like to reward those who are deserving. Lilian has never caused me a day's anxiety, and though the prospect of parting with her is unpleasant, and although I think she would have been wiser in keeping Mr. Auriol at a distance, and in remaining single like myself and her Aunt Evelyn, I do not wish to distress her by my opposition, and have consented to her marriage at an early opportunity."

"That is kind, Aunt Winifred," said Arthur ; "for I know that Lilian is very happy in her engagement, and I am sure that Mr. Auriol is a good man, and will give her all the love and care she deserves. I once saw him, and liked him very much."

"He is a good man, as men go," said Miss Winifred ; "indeed, I may say that I can trust Mr. Auriol. *Few* men are to be trusted ; in fact, I don't know of one other in whom I can place implicit confidence. During Lilian's absence I have seen a good deal of her lover, and made many inquiries about him, as to the opinion in which he is held in his parish and among his neighbours, and the result I have found extremely satisfactory. If it had not been so, I should at once have forbidden him the house ; but I am glad to find that there is one honest man in the world. Lilian very foolishly told Mr. Auriol that there was an unpleasant secret connected with her family, and his conduct in the matter has much raised him in my estimation. I told him plainly that if he would not take my niece for her own worth, and be content with such information as she chose to give him about her relations, and be satisfied *not* to know the secret which she had no business to have mentioned to him, he should not have her, or have a word

more to say to her. Why should men want to know all their wives' secrets? I asked him that question, and of course he could not answer it in any reasonable manner. However, he very properly said that he should be quite content to know only such particulars of her affairs as his wife chose to tell him, and that it was Lilian herself he wanted and cared for, not her family or her fortune. Which sentiment I much approved. I *hope* dear Lilian may never have cause to repent of her bargain; but men are a terribly selfish and deceitful race, and because I have told you that I respect and trust Mr. Auriol, I do not wish you to understand, Arthur, that my opinion of the rest of the sex is in any way altered. If *you* had not deceived me, I might, perhaps, have been induced to modify my long-formed opinion—formed, Arthur, from experience and close observance of character during many years. But you have gone the way of all the rest, and I consider that the blame would have rested very much upon *your* shoulders had I sent Mr. Auriol away, and refused to listen to his suit for Lilian."

"I have enough on my shoulders, Aunt Winifred," said Arthur, with a smile that was followed by a heavy sigh, "to make me feel glad that I have not to reproach myself with spoiling poor Lilian's happiness in life! How is Mr. Everard? I intended to go and see him on my way through. I will call on him before I come to the Tower this evening.

"You go back to London to-morrow, I hope," said Miss Winifred. "I do not want you hanging about Pointhaven, Arthur; it is very unpleasant to my feelings. I doubt if you will settle down to your work properly after spending a whole month in luxury and cultivated society. For I suppose Hazel *is* somewhat more cultivated than when she first left Pointhaven, although she cannot yet be up to the standard of other young ladies. However, in a quiet

country place it does not so much matter. If you had obeyed my wishes, Arthur, and followed the course which I had marked out for you, you might by this time have been ordained, and in the possession of a comfortable curacy, and quite in a position to offer your hand to Miss Ravenstone, which of course is *now* quite out of the question."

"Don't, Aunt Winifred!" exclaimed Arthur, in an imploring tone, his pale face flushing painfully.

"The Thursfields are quite as good a family as the Ravensstones," continued Miss Winifred, "and the Raymonds too, although Hazel's father has a title, and no doubt thinks a great deal of himself. The Thursfields are a very old and aristocratic family—more shame to your father for disgracing them, and to you for wishing to free him from his just punishment. I wish I could place the confidence in you, Arthur, which I place in Mr. Auriol! But to expect two sensible and trustworthy men to exist together in this world would be *too* much, I suppose."

And wishing her nephew farewell till the evening, when she supposed she might again see him, Miss Raymond called a cab, and followed her niece and Mr. Auriol home, leaving Arthur to walk on to Mr. Everard's in a somewhat complicated frame of mind—amusement, sorrow, and anger striving for the mastery.

The blind man was greatly interested in hearing all Arthur had to tell him of his former pupil's new home, of her father, and especially of her progress in her musical studies, about which Arthur was enthusiastic, describing her voice and her playing of her little organ, with an eagerness of appreciation which made Mr. Everard smile.

"You have told me just what I wanted to know," he said, "for though it is not long since Hazel came to see me, she was very shy of sounding her own praises, and spoke very modestly of her powers as a musician. But I always knew she had great genius for music, and I am

looking forward to hearing her play her beautiful new organ to me some day, for I am bound to visit Ravenstone when I can get a few days' holiday. Mr. Miller, while you talk to me, your voice always carries me back so vividly to my young days. It is so like the voice of a friend of mine—my greatest friend during many years of my life. I can almost fancy that it is he who is speaking to me."

"Who was he?" asked Arthur, in an interested tone. "Is he still alive?"

"He died many years ago," answered Mr. Everard. "His name was Thursfield—Arthur Thursfield. Strange, is it not, that I had a friend who has a namesake in Point-haven? I have never mentioned his name to Miss Thursfield, but I have often wondered whether she can be in any way related to my friend. Your voice is as like his as any voice *can* be like another. I wonder sometimes whether you would not be like him in appearance if I could see you."

"Had he any brothers?" asked Arthur. "How was it that you knew him?"

"We were at school and college together," answered Mr. Everard, "and remained fast friends afterwards, and saw a great deal of each other before we married. Afterwards we met as often as we could, though it was not quite so frequently as before, as up to that time we had both lived in London chiefly, and so had had constant opportunities of meeting. My friend had one brother, many years younger than himself. They were early left orphans, and Arthur had a good deal of anxiety on his brother's account. He—Charlie Thursfield—was of a weak, yielding, and somewhat selfish disposition, and, while very young, developed tastes which his brother much disapproved of and tried to check. Arthur was a particularly noble-minded, upright fellow, and was much troubled about his little brother's bad habits,

which grew upon him as he became older. At the same time Charlie had a way of ingratiating himself into people's favour; he was a handsome young fellow, and had winning ways with people, which made him a favourite with those who did not know his faults—his secret selfishness and weak obstinacy. He married very young, and went out to India as an officer in a regiment of Hussars; and his brother, before his death, which occurred very soon afterwards, entrusted him to my care, begging that I would occasionally write to him, and give him good advice, which he felt he very much needed. However, I very seldom received an answer to my letters, and when my troubles came upon me—the death of my wife and child, and my own serious illness and blindness—the correspondence almost entirely ceased. I received two letters afterwards at intervals, which I answered, but for some years past I have heard nothing of my dear friend's brother, and do not know whether he is dead or alive. He got himself into very serious difficulty, poor fellow, from extravagance and fast living, and I have often wondered what has become of his wife and children, for he was imprisoned at last—so I heard—on his return to England some years ago, for a very heavy debt to a Mr. Ratcliffe, who had lent him large sums of money at different times.”

“Do you know if he owed money to anyone else?” asked Arthur, in an eager voice. “If so, can you tell me to whom? I have a special reason for asking.”

A flush came over the blind man's face; he hesitated, and Arthur went on—

“Mr. Everard, have *you* lent him money? You say that his brother entrusted him to your care. Did he apply to you for money help? And is it your kindness to him which has brought you to this poverty, which you told me was not always your lot? I know that you were once rich and had many friends, for you have told me so. Please do

not think that it is idle and impertinent curiosity which makes me wish to know this."

"I am quite sure of that, my dear young friend," answered Mr. Everard. "I had no wish to mention my own concern in the matter, but I will tell *you*, if you particularly wish to know, that which I feel sure you will never mention to others. Captain Thursfield *did*, several times after his brother's death, apply to me for money to keep him out of the difficulties to which his ruinous extravagance brought him. And for his brother's sake—for my dead friend's sake, who had been as a brother to me also—I paid his debts for him, perhaps oftener than was prudent, for at last I left myself with scarcely any means of support. I was severely blamed for it by my friends, many of whom, alas! proved themselves but hollow friends when my troubles came, and I became poor and blind. It was after losing my wife and daughter, that I parted with the large sum, the loss of which reduced me to the condition of poverty in which I lived for many years, until this appointment was given to me; for what use or pleasure could riches be to me, I said to myself, when I was left alone in the world—when all I loved had been taken from me? I felt at that time that I cared little what became of me, and rashly, as I confess it to have been, parted with almost all I had, to save poor Thursfield from utter ruin. I feared that my help would be of little *real* use—that he would only escape from present difficulties to fall into greater ones before long; but the thought of his wife and children, and of my promise to my friend, urged me to save him if possible; and for myself, as I have said, I then cared little what might happen. I became blind soon after, and perhaps for my own difficulties and trials since, I *have* been to blame, though not quite in the way which I know is imagined. For it may have been weak and foolish in me to do as I did—my friends told me that it was—and yet I cannot now

feel sorry. I think I would act in the same way again. I only wish it could have been with better results, for my worst fears were more than realised when I heard of Captain Thursfield's imprisonment for debt, not heavier certainly than he owed to me, but—well, I know that he deserved his punishment, and I cannot blame Mr. Ratcliffe for acting as he did. Arthur Thursfield was not *his* friend, and it is for *his* sake that I have always kept silence. I should not have told you of this now, Mr. Miller, had you not appeared so anxious to know. And now, is it not fair that you should tell me *why* you take such an interest in a poor blind man's affairs?"

"What I have to tell you will surprise you, Mr. Everard," said Arthur, slowly. "It is my father whom you have benefited so generously, and who, in return for your goodness, has caused you loss of friends and fortune, and years of suffering! I am Arthur Thursfield—Captain Thursfield's son, and Lilian's brother, and nephew of the Arthur Thursfield who was your friend, and whose name I am proud to bear. I never knew him, but I have heard enough of his goodness and of his noble nature to make me respect his memory as I have never been able to respect"—

And Arthur broke off, and covered his face with his hands, in uncontrollable emotion.

"*You* Arthur Thursfield's nephew—the son of Captain Thursfield?" repeated Mr. Everard, in a bewildered tone. "If so, I am quite sure that it is not only in *voice* that you resemble my dear old friend. I wish that I could see you! But your name is Miller; why are you called by that name if you are indeed Captain Thursfield's son?"

"I am only called so here in Pointhaven," answered Arthur, "because my aunt, Miss Raymond, is ashamed of my business, and does not wish my existence to be known in the neighbourhood in which she resides. When my work brought me here, I took the name of Miller, to save

her annoyance, and no one in Pointhaven knows that I am the brother of Lilian, and nephew of the Miss Raymonds—no one at least until quite lately. Mr. Auriol now knows, but he is the only person besides yourself who is aware that Miller is only a feigned name."

"And your father?" said Mr. Everard, "what of him? It is a painful subject, my poor fellow, but you and I are fellow-sufferers, and you will tell me what his fate has been."

Arthur told his tale—as much as he knew of his father's life since he had left India, and had been undergoing the penalty of his folly and sin—of his own work undertaken to pay the debt to Mr. Ratcliffe and set his father free, and his consequent estrangement from his relations, and painful separation from his only sister, to which his blind friend listened with intensest interest and sympathy.

"And now," said Arthur, "when I am beginning to look forward to the end of my work, I find that it is to you, generous friend that you have been, that my father owes yet more than he has ever owed to Mr. Ratcliffe! How can I ever repay you? This other debt will not be cleared off for three years, and then when can *you* be repaid? I *will* repay you every farthing in time, if my life is spared! I will work night and day rather than that you should suffer any longer than is necessary!"

"You will do nothing of the kind, Arthur," said Mr. Everard, imperatively. "I will not allow you to return me a penny of the money which your father has had from me. It was not all *lent*. I never expected payment for a great deal of what I sent him, and you have enough on your shoulders already, poor boy, without thinking of working on *my* account. If I had had the least idea that you were Charlie Thursfield's son, I would never have allowed a breath of this to reach your ears! Besides, I am not now suffering. This new appointment is much better than my

old one, and supplies all my wants. A blind man's wants are few, you know, and I am very comfortable in this position. Believe me, this is the truth. I own that I *have* suffered, but that is past, and my present comfort I owe to you, Arthur. I know that it was through you that I obtained this post, for Mr. Stuart told me that you had worried him into dismissing Reynolds and engaging me in his place."

Arthur smiled. "You may thank me for that if you like," he said, "but it is a small thing to have done for one who has given up everything for the sake of my father. Dear Mr. Everard, I only wish I could assure you of his gratitude as I can of my own!"

"He has never mentioned my name, then?" said Mr. Everard, with a slight accent of disappointment in his tones.

"Never," answered Arthur. "I have tried to find out from him what other debts he owes, feeling sure that there *were* others, but he would not tell me. He passed the matter off in a manner which made me believe, at least *hope*, that whatever others there were, consisted only of trifling amounts. How can he think of your great kindness, and of the wrong he has done you, without shame and remorse!"

"Never mind," said Mr. Everard, gently. "Do not let that distress you. I did not help him for his thanks and praises. He forgot me, I dare say, in the great trouble which afterwards befel him. That must have been enough to fill and distress his mind ever since. Poor fellow! There are some people, Arthur—I like to call you Arthur for my friend's sake—who soon forget what is done for them, and Charlie Thursfield was always one of those. Forgive me; I forget that he is your father, and that such reflections upon him, however true, must be very painful to you."

"The thought of him has sometimes been almost too

great a pain to bear," said Arthur, with a heavy sigh. "Surely there can be no greater trial than to have a parent for whom you can feel no respect—upon whom all your natural affection is wasted!"

"But he is grateful?" said Mr. Everard. "Surely your noble devotion has had some good effect upon him—has softened him?"

"Very little as yet," said Arthur, the tears starting to his eyes. "He thinks only of himself—my poor father! And he does not even feel the disgrace. He tells me when I visit him that he has, on the whole, been very comfortable since he has been in his present quarters, much more so than he might have been elsewhere, in his reduced circumstances. But the hardest heart may be softened, I know, and if our prayers—Lilian's and mine—can avail anything, we know that we *shall* see a change in him at last. It is weary work, this thankless saving and scraping of every penny, and this dark waiting—hopeless anxiety it sometimes seems! But I don't mean to despair. My chief thought will now be of you, Mr. Everard, of your goodness, unknown and unrequited as it has been! You will let me tell my sister? You *must* let me tell my sister what you have done."

"No one else," said Mr. Everard, "and Miss Lilian only on condition that she keeps it a secret as you will do. Poor children, both of you! would that I could have spared you a little of the sorrow you have endured so bravely! Do not think of me, Arthur. Finish your work, and liberate your father, and forget what I told you. You drew it from me, you know, and you are not to dwell upon it. I only wish I could have saved poor Charlie, and you his children, from the pain of his disgrace!"

"You have done too much already," said Arthur, warmly; "and I am only grieved to think that my father himself should apparently have forgotten your goodness. You will

have your reward in heaven, Mr. Everard, if not in this world."

"In heaven, yes," said the blind man to himself, when Arthur had left him a few minutes later, "if indeed I deserve any reward. Poor boy! he, too, has worked for years without either love or gratitude in return. Gratitude is pleasant, and I should have been glad, I confess, to think that Charlie Thursfield had not quite forgotten my existence. But he was never one to remember what was done for him. I feared that his wild ways shortened his wife's life—a sweet little wife, too, I heard at the time he married her. It is sad to think how she must have been deceived in him, and yet what a pleasant fellow he could be when he liked! She was very young, and they said she was devoted to him. She did not know what he really was, poor young thing! but I am afraid she must soon have found it out. What a difference between father and son! It was a happy thing for this young fellow and Miss Lilian that they knew so little of their father, and were so entirely under their mother's influence. Poor children! I am glad for their sakes that I did what I could to save poor Charlie from disgrace."





CHAPTER XXXVII.

“You must bear with me.
I pray you now, forget and forgive.”

—*King Lear.*

ARTHUR THURSFIELD had been at work about a fortnight, when he received one morning a letter in a strange handwriting, which created some little curiosity in his mind as he turned it over and over, trying to guess, before opening it, from whom it could possibly come. His first idea was that it contained bad news of his father, and while eager to open it, he felt a strange reluctance to do so, and allowed it to remain some minutes unopened, while he devoured a long letter from Lillian. The unexpected news, that her marriage with Mr. Auriol was to take place at Christmas time, so engrossed his thoughts afterwards, that it was not till the striking of the clock warned him that he must be off to his work, that he again thought of the strange letter, and he tore it open hurriedly as he went off to the works. The signature—Horace Ratcliffe—which he first looked at brought a quick flush to his face, and he eagerly read the short note, which, to his intense surprise, informed him that “a certain portion of the debt for which Captain Thursfield was undergoing imprisonment had recently been discharged by a friend, who, not wishing his name to be known in the

matter, had begged him to write at once to Captain Thursfield's son, in order to relieve his mind of part of his anxiety, by assuring him that the necessary amount which he was by his own exertions striving to repay was now lessened by nearly one third!"

This unexpected goodness almost took Arthur's breath away. "A friend," Mr. Ratcliffe said, had paid the debt, though whether a friend to himself, to Arthur, or to the imprisoned Captain, was not very clearly seen. Arthur could not think of any friend of his own who would be likely to pay the money, for he had so few friends who knew anything of the matter at all, and he was inclined to think that Mr. Ratcliffe meant one of his *own* friends. Unless—and a sudden thought struck Arthur—unless it were his Aunt Winifred! It was she who had secretly paid his doctor's bill three years ago at the lighthouse, and might it not be that she had at last so far relented as to pay this money to Mr. Ratcliffe also? She would know, by questioning Lillian, the exact sum of money still required, and could well afford to pay it, and would also be quite sure to keep the affair secret, and to wish that Arthur should not know what she had done, after her repeated asseverations that *she* would never move a finger in the matter. And though Mr. Ratcliffe spoke of the friend not wishing "*his*" name to be known, that masculine pronoun proved nothing, and might as well apply to his Aunt Winifred as to anyone else. Yes, it was Arthur's firm conclusion that Miss Raymond was the anonymous sender of the money, and he seized a few moments at his dinner hour to write a hasty note to her, telling her of the letter he had received, and begging her, "if she had any clue to the kind friend who had done the deed, to assure him or her of his deepest gratitude." In a feverish state of excitement he then went to Mr. Woodward, and obtained an hour or two's leave of absence, in

order that he might draw out his savings at once from the bank, and despatch them without delay to Mr. Ratcliffe. It was with a feeling of untold satisfaction and relief that he returned from the post office, and went to his afternoon work, and with great excitement that he waited for Ratcliffe's reply to his letter. It came two days afterwards, and Arthur read, with a thankfulness which he could scarcely realise, the joyful news that the debt had been entirely cleared off by his own savings, added to the sum sent by the unknown friend; that his father was now free, and that Mr. Ratcliffe would be most happy to take immediate steps to assist Arthur in procuring his release. It seemed too good to be true, and Arthur read the letter over and over again, as if he could not take it in at once, feeling as if it were a dream which could be shattered in a few minutes. Then bowing his head upon his hands, he thanked God earnestly for the merciful answer which He had given to the prayers of so many weary years—the answer which had come so much more speedily than he had ever dared to hope.

The first thing to be done was to write to Lilian and tell her the joyful news, by which means he was able to let off a little of the effervescence of delight and thankfulness, which seemed more than he knew how to bear. By the time he had got to the end of his letter he felt calmer and better able to think over the business which lay before him—a difficult business for a young man to undertake. Mr. Woodward had always been a kind and sympathising friend to him, and Arthur determined to confide in him, and ask his advice as to how he should proceed in the matter. He fortunately found him disengaged, and had a long interview with him, and Mr. Woodward at once set him free from work until the whole affair should be comfortably settled. Mrs. Featherwell, the landlady, wondered at the unusually bright face of her young and favourite

lodger, when she brought him his mid-day meal, and at his good spirits, which, as she said to herself, "did her heart good, for he *did* look often enough as if he might be carrying the whole world on his shoulders, not to speak of the moon and the stars!" But she was in some perplexity when she brought away his dinner almost untasted, for "what was good spirits for, if not to make a good appetite?" and Mrs. Featherwell feared the news young Mr. Thursfield had evidently heard might not be so good after all as she had thought, and that maybe he only looked so cheerful because the last new organ had turned out so satisfactory; "for she had known the young gentleman wonderful happy over the organs when they were just as they should be."

Far greater, however, was the worthy landlady's astonishment when, one evening about a week later, a strange gentleman accompanied her young lodger home, whose appearance caused her to exclaim to her daughter, as she returned to the kitchen after letting them in, that "there was young Mr. Thursfield come home with the remains of a fine military gentleman with him; but for more than remains she could not speak, for he looked just like the shadow of what he *might* have been, and that was all." Which opinion gave perhaps as correct a picture of Captain Thursfield as any more elaborate description could do.

A tall, slim figure, graceful still, though much wasted, a white, sickly-looking, and somewhat effeminate though handsome face, with light blue eyes which had a weak, irresolute expression in them, fair hair and military moustache, and hands white and delicate as a lady's—these were the characteristics of the long-imprisoned officer, whose bearing and general appearance, in spite of the shabbiness of his fashionably-cut clothes, and the air of dissipation which he wore, were undoubtedly those of a

gentleman. What Captain Thursfield's feelings were, and had been on the day when his son had first informed him of his freedom, it was not very easy to discover. He had taken the whole matter very easily, and had laughed and joked all the way to Arthur's lodgings in a manner which had grated terribly on the poor young fellow's feelings. He did not appear yet to understand or appreciate in the least the dutiful love which, ill-deserved as it had been, had kept Arthur up to the thankless task of the past seven years, or the generous self-sacrifice which his son had made for him. He was glad to be free, but the easy nonchalance with which he had received the news, and prepared to leave his prison quarters, had struck Arthur's heart with a sort of cold chill, and disappointed him more than any one would have guessed, from the quietly cheerful manner in which he ministered to his father's comforts that evening, and the forced brightness with which he answered his remarks about the small size and meagre furniture of his apartments, and the generally unfashionable air of the locality which he had chosen to reside in. Perhaps he had been too hopeful, and had pictured to himself a more sudden change in his father's self-indulgent character than was possible or natural. Certainly the disappointment he felt was very keen, and when his father had dropped off to sleep in his arm-chair by the fire, after a comfortable dinner and his usual cigar, Arthur's head sunk upon his hands, and he gave way to an uncontrollable burst of tears. He had not worked for reward, but just a word or two of thanks and love would have encouraged him in the work still before him—the work of supporting his father and himself, and of making his father's life a happy one, which Arthur feared it was not very likely to be, without plenty of means at command to secure him the comforts and luxuries which he would be sure to expect. He was very feeble, and had evidently injured his constitution so far as to make work an

impossibility to *him* in future ; but Arthur knew that his own position as it now was would afford him ample means of supplying all his father's wants, and now that the putting by of large yearly sums would be no longer necessary, of removing to larger and pleasanter lodgings, in which Captain Thursfield might be happy and comfortable. That his Aunt Winifred would open her doors to him Arthur did not believe for a moment, although she had, as he believed, assisted in paying off the debt ; and though Lilian was shortly to be married, Arthur felt sure that *her* home ought not to be Captain Thursfield's. She would no doubt propose that it should be, and even wish it, but Arthur decided at once in his own mind that it would not do—at least while his father remained in his present condition. He would only make Lilian miserable, and it was her brother's determination that that should not be. He would rather suffer himself than in any way interfere with her happiness ; and that he *would* and *must* suffer was only too evident. For what could ever become of his love for Hazel, while he worked on as an organ-builder, with his father to support during perhaps years of weakness and ill-health ? The thought almost drove him wild, for this love would not be conquered—it had been only all the stronger since he had felt sure that it was returned.

Arthur felt in a very despondent mood that night, and it was with almost hysterical joy that he welcomed his sister next morning—she and Miss Evelyn turning up quite unexpectedly at his lodgings about eleven o'clock.

"I am going to leave Lilian here, dear Arthur," said Miss Evelyn, "while I walk a little further. I will come again in an hour or so, and call for her, and will then ask to see your poor father. You will get on best without me at present. I shall want to talk over plans with you when I return. We came up to London yesterday afternoon ; Lilian was so impatient to see her father and you, and your

Aunt Winifred thought it best that we should come and let you know at once what she wished about poor Charlie. But I will tell you when I return."

And kissing her niece, who was trembling with excitement, Miss Evelyn went away, and Arthur ushered his sister into the parlour, where her father sat looking at a newspaper, after a late breakfast. What passed in that interview Miss Evelyn could only guess, when, on her return, she found the Captain sobbing like a child, with Lilian close beside him, her hands clasped in one of his.

"Charlie," she said, gently, touching his arm, "do you remember me, Evelyn Raymond? I have come to ask you to come home with me—to forget all the past and its troubles, and to share our home—mine and Winifred's—till God calls us to a better one."

"Winifred's?" exclaimed Captain Thursfield, lifting his head, and glancing at his sister-in-law with an almost derisive smile. "Winifred always hated me, don't you remember that, Evelyn? *You* were kind and good—like my poor wife, whom I helped to kill—but Winifred! who says she wants to see me?"

"She says so herself," answered Miss Evelyn; "she told me to tell you so. She knows that you are ill and suffering, and I have come to London on purpose to tell you that her home is ready for you."

"Has she forgiven too?" murmured the Captain; "have they all forgiven? If Winifred has done so, it is not for my sake, Evelyn, it is for the sake of my child Lilian, whom she loves. Lilian is so like her mother! I thought when she came in an hour or two ago that it was her mother who had come out of her grave to reproach me. They said I killed her, you know—worried her to death by my ways; I never believed it till I saw Lilian, and she came and spoke to me with *her* voice; now I believe it is true, and she—my own daughter—has come to reproach

me! Why do you interfere with me, Lilian, and torture me like this? Before I saw you I was as happy and careless as I have been all my life; I never felt remorse till one hour ago."

"I have not reproached you, father, dear," said Lilian, gently; "I have come to ask you to love Arthur and me, and to come home, as Aunt Evelyn says, and be happy. What I have said to you about Arthur has troubled you, but it has only been said because I wanted you to know how good he is, and to understand what he has done. Won't you thank him, father?"

"Hush, Lily!" murmured Arthur, but Lilian would not be silenced, and continued—

"He has worked so hard for you, and suffered so much for your sake, father! Won't you tell him you are grateful to him? And to Aunt Evelyn, too, for she has helped him?"

"Come here, Arthur!" said Captain Thursfield, in a broken voice. "I have not realised the depth of your goodness, and of the sacrifice which you have made for me. I have been a selfish, heartless father, wrapped up in my own concerns, with no thought of my toiling son, and my unselfish daughter and sister. I have thought of nothing but myself all my life, and have sacrificed everything to the pleasures of an hour. Winifred may well hate me! I cannot see her—I will see no one. Let me bury myself out of everyone's sight and be forgotten! Do not let me be hooted and hissed at in the streets as a discharged prisoner, who may be any day taken up again for debts unknown to the world! Don't you know, Arthur, that I owe a larger sum to Mr. Everard, my brother's old friend, than you have paid to Mr. Ratcliffe? He will have his revenge now; and I shall be taken back to that place as soon as I am out of it. Why did you take me out? I was happy enough there, before Lilian came to fill me with

these dreadful feelings ; but now if I am sent back I shall go mad ! Don't tell Mr. Everard that I am free !”

“Hush, father !” said Arthur, soothingly, taking the excited man's hand in his own. “Mr. Everard has forgiven you for a long, long time. He will never move a finger against you, and will rejoice in your freedom. He will never ask you for a penny of that money—he has told me so—though I intend in time to restore him a *part* of it at least. You are ill and not able to think. Will you not go to your room and rest quietly, and leave me to arrange what is best for your comfort with Aunt Evelyn ?”

The Captain rose wearily and took his son's arm, as with unsteady footsteps he crossed the room. As he passed his sister-in-law, he held out his hand to her, saying—

“You have been very kind to help the children, Evelyn, and I thank you for what you have done. I have deserved no help from you or Winifred, and I cannot wonder at her shrinking from me. But she has loved my little Lilian, and has given her a home, and that is enough. I am weak and nerveless, and care little what you do with me, but my son, who has been so good and noble, will not expose me to the world's scorn ; will you, Arthur ?” And he looked imploringly into his son's face. “You will protect me, will you not, and help me to hide from the jeers and taunts of the world ? I did not care what was thought of me when I was there, within those prison walls. I laughed at the idea of being treated with scorn. But now this horrible remorse ! I wish I could never see a human face again, except those around me !”

“Take him away, Arthur,” whispered Miss Evelyn. “Keep him quiet, or he will work himself into a brain fever. Make him lie down, and then come back to me.”

It was a quarter-of-an-hour before Arthur could leave

his unhappy father, who, now that the feeling of remorse and repentance had once been awakened in his heart, was, from the very weakness of his nature, in a state of terror and excitement most difficult to deal with, and painful to witness. The sight of Lilian, who every year grew more strikingly like her lost mother, had completely unnerved him, and in the weak state of his health and mind also, he had, for the moment, been firmly possessed of the idea that it was really his dead wife come to reproach him.

"What a terrible wreck of the bright young fellow whom I remember!" said Miss Evelyn, wiping her eyes, as Arthur returned at last to the parlour. "I could not have believed such a change to be possible! Except that, when one thinks of his life, one can indeed scarcely wonder at it! His weakness was his ruin—poor Charlie! But children, this suffering and distress of mind, painful as it is, is what we must thank God for. Far better that he should feel this remorse and shame than continue in the carelessness and levity which have made him all his life so hard to deal with!"

"Yes, I would ten times rather see him as he is," said Arthur, passionately, "than as I have so often seen him—always seen him, in fact, until now. Then there seemed no hope, but now—O, Lily, there may be happy days for us yet!"

"When this dark hour is past, and God has given him that peace which passeth all understanding," said Miss Evelyn, solemnly. "He needs our prayers now, dear children, and as one of our prayers has already been so mercifully answered for him, we need not fear that others will not be also. We must be very thankful too that your Aunt Winifred's heart is so far softened to your father. She wishes that he should come and share her home, which will be a quiet and retired one for him, and where she feels he will be happier than anywhere else. It was entirely her

own idea, though I had also secretly wished it, and I was surprised when she mentioned it to me the evening before last, and asked me to come with Lilian to London and to bring your father back with me. She wishes to see *you*, Arthur, as soon as possible. Can you come down with us, if only for a day?"

"Certainly," said Arthur. "Mr. Woodward has kindly given me a holiday for as long as is necessary, and I shall be glad to see my poor father comfortably settled at the Tower. Aunt Evelyn, I had not the least hope of Aunt Winifred's relenting so far as to offer him a home with herself and you! I was wondering despondently to myself last night how I could manage to make a cheerful, happy home for him here in London, and how long he would be contented with it. This good news of Aunt Winifred's unexpected kindness has relieved me immensely."

"You forget another home, Arthur," said Lilian, blushing, "which there would be for him after Christmas. Harry would be quite willing that he should share *our* home."

Arthur shook his head. "The Tower will be much better for him, Lilian," he said. "It would be a terrible anxiety to you, and it will be far better and pleasanter for you that he should only visit you now and then—not live constantly with you. There shall be no cloud over your new home, dear Lilian; you would find the constant care a much heavier burden than you imagine. Besides, the quiet home at the Tower will, I know, suit him best. Aunt Evelyn, do you know—have you any idea if I am right in supposing Aunt Winifred to have paid to Mr. Ratcliffe the part of the debt which I still had to make up? From her answer to my letter on the subject, I could not make out anything. It *seemed* certainly as if she knew nothing whatever about the payment having been made."

"I do not think she did know anything of it," answered

Miss Evelyn. "If she had paid the money, I believe she would have told *me*, and she has never done so. And she seemed as much at a loss as myself to think who the kind friend could be."

"Arthur," said Lilian, suddenly, "have you ever thought of Sir Reginald? Don't you think it is possible that he may have done it?"

Arthur's face flushed. "I hardly think so," he said, hesitatingly. "He was exceedingly kind and sympathising, but I scarcely think he would do it. He knows so little of me comparatively, he would hardly feel enough interest."

"Well, we cannot tell," said Miss Evelyn. "It may have been some friend of your father's, Arthur, of whom we know nothing. Poor boy! how glad I am that your work is over at last!"

"Over so far," said Arthur, with a sigh, "but now it must begin all over again. However, it is a work I like, that is one thing; and one cannot have all one wishes for in this world. I thought not very long ago that when my father was free I should wish for nothing, and should be quite contented to go on quietly with my work, but now—I think I have grown wicked lately, for I am as full of discontent as possible!"

"Wait a little longer, Arthur," said Lilian, gently; "such work as yours has been will not go unrewarded; only be patient a little while. Can you and father be ready to-morrow? Is he strong enough to bear the journey to Pointhaven?"

"I think so," said Arthur, "if I can keep him quiet. It will be better, I think, for me to be alone with him during the rest of the day. Your coming has excited the feelings which I scarcely dared hope for last night, dear Lily, and now a little quiet time will do him good. We will meet you and Aunt Evelyn to-morrow, and all go down to Pointhaven together."



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"The noblest mind he carries
That ever govern'd man."

—*Timon of Athens.*

"I love thee better now than e'er I did."

—*Ibid.*



APTAIN THURSFIELD made no remonstrance to the plan which had been arranged for him, and accompanied his son to the station, where Lilian and Miss Evelyn were to meet them the following morning, in almost speechless acquiescence. He scarcely spoke during the journey, but sat, looking wretchedly ill, with his head bowed upon his breast, the don't-care look, which had so long characterised his face, replaced by an expression of hopeless regret, shame, and fear.

There was little change visible in Miss Raymond's outward demeanour, as she greeted her brother-in-law and nephew, and in the coldly-dignified tones in which she directed the servants to carry Captain Thursfield's luggage to the room prepared for him; but both her sister and Lilian detected a secret nervousness in her manner, and Arthur thought the hand which she offered him trembled as he took it. She presided at the tea-table, as if nothing unusual had occurred to disturb the wonted calm and quiet atmosphere of her dwelling, and spoke of all sorts of ordinary matters to her brother-in-law, as well as to every-

one else, just as if she had been accustomed to see him at her corner of the table for years. Captain Thursfield was evidently astonished at her calm reception of him, but too ill and miserable to speak a word more than was necessary. He made but short replies to any of her remarks, keeping his eyes fixed upon his plate while he spoke, as if he could not summon courage to raise them. Lilian and Arthur, who watched their aunt furtively, saw her looking fixedly at their father when she thought she was not observed, and once saw tears come into her eyes as she withdrew them. They both exerted themselves to make their father's home-coming a cheerful one; but everyone felt relieved when tea was over, and Miss Winifred's studious endeavours to keep up the conversation were brought to an end. As she rose to leave the dining-room, she said to her nephew—

“I am going to the library, Arthur, and shall be glad to speak with you there. Ask your father to come there to me first for a few minutes, and after that I shall wish to see you alone.”

What passed during the interview, first with the Captain and then with Arthur, Miss Evelyn and Lilian, waiting restlessly in the drawing-room, could only imagine. They heard Captain Thursfield go up to his own room after leaving the library, and then a full hour elapsed before Miss Raymond and her nephew came together to join them. But when they came it was with bright faces—Arthur's brighter and happier than Lilian had seen it for years, except during those weeks of delight at Ravenstone. And Miss Winifred's was bright, too, though it bore evident traces of tears.

“Evelyn and Lilian,” she said, as she took her usual seat at her work-table near the fireplace, “I wish to tell you both that I am perfectly satisfied with my nephew's conduct during the past seven years—that I am sorry for having closed my doors against one who has shown himself to be

the noblest and most devoted of sons, and have entirely restored him to my favour, feeling now for him a deeper and more admiring affection, and a stronger trust than I have ever placed in man since the deception of one destroyed my faith in the whole race."

Arthur stooped and kissed his aunt's forehead.

"No more, Aunt Winifred," he said, with a smile, "or from the most untrustworthy, I shall become the most conceited of men!"

"I have not said all I wished to say," said Miss Winifred, in a voice which did not sound as if it were quite at her own control. "Let me speak, Arthur. I wished to tell you, Evelyn, and you, my dear Lilian, that every word I have spoken in disparagement of this noble young man and of his work, I have to-night retracted. He disappointed me, it is true, more deeply than any of you know, who never gave me credit for the intense pride I always felt in him; but he did right, and I acquit him of all blame. His duty to his father and to his father's creditor came before his duty to myself, and I honour and respect him for the fearlessness with which he ventured out alone into the world, giving up for conscience sake a happy home and the bright prospects before him, and for the conscientiousness and unwearied perseverance which he has shown in the discharge of a thankless and painful task. You may well look proud of your brother, Lilian. It is a consolation to me, when I think of the wreck your unhappy father has become, to feel that I have a nephew and a nephew-in-law of whom I may be proud, and in whom I may always take comfort. There are few men in whom I feel any confidence, but with your name, Arthur, and Harry Auriol's, I believe I may safely couple Mr. Everard's as that of another noble and self-sacrificing specimen of your sex."

"Thank you, Aunt Winnie," said Arthur, "both on my

dear old blind friend's behalf and on my own. But please do not think better of me than I deserve."

"Impossible!" said Miss Winifred, decisively. "Now, Lilian, my love, listen to me. Your father, as you already know, makes this his home for the future; and this being the case, there is no reason why Arthur should not pursue the course to which, in his earliest years, I destined him. This is the last day of September. In October, at the proper time, your brother will enter upon his university life at Cambridge, and in three years' time I shall hope to see him ordained a clergyman of the Church of England—that being the profession which, as you know, it was always my wish he should adopt."

"And his own wish, too, Aunt Winifred," cried Lilian, clapping her hands. "Oh, Arthur, does she really mean that you are to be a clergyman after all? But what will you do without your organs?"

"Poor organs!" said Arthur, with a sigh. "It will be hard to give them up, I confess. But church work was my first choice, Lily, and I am very, very thankful to Aunt Winifred for putting it in my power to undertake that better work at last. And I think I can manage *not* to do *without* organs. I shall want play as well as work, you know. My only scruple is that I am too proud quite to approve of being educated at my aunt's expense *now*. A man twenty-four years of age ought to be independent."

"Every man twenty-four years of age has not done what you have done," said Miss Winifred. "And as for your pride, Arthur, you will have to pocket it, for my mind is made up. You will not a second time disappoint me?"

And she looked at him with an unwonted sparkle in her sharp grey eyes.

"No, Aunt Winnie, I did not mean what I said," answered Arthur, taking her hand in his. "I am only

too grateful to you for your kind offer to know how to express my thanks. I know it is your earnest wish that I should accept it, and I do so thankfully."

"Your father has been telling me of Mr. Everard's kindness to him years ago," said Miss Raymond, "and of the money which he owes him, and has never made the least effort to repay. I am ashamed to think of it; but I mention the subject because I hear, Arthur, that you are intending to pay off that debt in time as you paid Mr. Ratcliffe's. Put that idea out of your head at once; you shall do nothing of the kind."

"I did not think of repaying the whole sum, aunt," replied Arthur, "for Mr. Everard declared to me that he would never think of receiving it. My idea was to lay by what I could, with a view of having a little store at hand, which might be acceptable to him at some future time, when he is no longer able to work for his living. He is getting an old man, and I cannot bear to think of his coming again to want and suffering."

"He shall never want," said Miss Winifred. "I will take care of that; so let your mind be at rest upon that subject. You will have quite enough to do with your money. A university career is expensive, and what you are able to save must be laid up against the day of your marriage. I shall wish to see you married some day, Arthur." A crimson flush came over Arthur's fair face, and he stooped to poke the fire with unnecessary ardour. "You need not necessarily wait either till the close of your university career," pursued Miss Winifred, "should you meet with a suitable wife *soon*. Not that you will be very old in three years, and *need* to think of marrying before that time; but where there is an attachment, I think it is better that marriage should not be long delayed. Of course I am only speaking of probabilities, as you have never told me of any one whom you fancied, and I merely mention

this to show you that you will find me willing to further *any* scheme for your happiness, Arthur."

"You are very good, Aunt Winifred!" said Arthur, with a warmth which caused Miss Evelyn and her niece to look at each other. Lilian squeezed his hand as she passed him, receiving in return a powerful grasp.

She and Arthur went up to their father shortly after, and remained with him for the rest of the evening. They could not prevail upon him to come downstairs, but they left him feeling a little comforted, and looking less hopelessly miserable than when he had left London. Two or three times during the night Arthur went to the door of his room and listened for any sound, for in the Captain's distress of mind he scarcely dared to leave him alone; but he passed a quieter night than his son had expected. Arthur himself could not rest; he was too much excited to sleep, or even to lie still, and paced up and down his room, and the corridor between his own door and his father's, nearly the whole night through. The Captain was very unwell, and did not leave his room for some days. Arthur was obliged to leave for London as soon as possible, to wind up his affairs with Mr. Woodward, and left his father in Mr. Auriol's care while he went. The Captain had fortunately taken a fancy to his future son-in-law, and Arthur hoped that his visits might do him some good, and was glad to think that he would look after him, and take his own place while he was away. It was with a rather sad heart that a few days afterwards he bade farewell to his old employer, who had always been a most kind friend to him, and to the work for which he felt a real love. However, there was higher work before him, and sorrowful though he was at parting with his beloved organs, he was full of thankfulness for the bright prospects before him, and for the delicious hope, now rendered possible, of confessing his love some day, after all, for Hazel Ravenstone.



CHAPTER XXXIX.

"Kneel not to me ;
The power that I have on you is to spare you ;
The malice towards you to forgive you ; live,
And deal with others better."

—*Timon of Athens.*

"**W**HAT do you think has happened now, mamma?" said Katie Stuart, entering the drawing-room at St. Mary's Vicarage in some excitement one afternoon, shortly after Captain Thursfield's arrival at the Tower. "I am beginning to think that wonders will never cease in Pointhaven."

"What is the matter?" asked Mrs. Stuart, who, with her youngest daughter, now emancipated from school life, were at work and chatting to Mr. Everard, who had called on a matter of business connected with the choir.

"Don't you know I always said there was some mystery connected with the Tower?" said Katie, triumphantly. "You all laughed at me; but I was right after all. Mr. Miller, and a stranger with him, arrived at the Tower a few nights ago with Miss Evelyn and Lilian, who had gone off mysteriously to London—don't you remember?—a day or two before, and the stranger proves to be a Captain Thursfield, who is Lilian's father, and Mr. Miller is not Mr. Miller at all, but the Captain's son and Lilian's own

brother! There! isn't that an interesting piece of news for you?"

"My dear Katie, are you sure it is true?" asked Mrs. Stuart. "Who has told you?"

"Mrs. Argyle," answered Katie. "She heard it from her maid, who is a great friend of one of the Tower servants. It is quite true, mamma. Captain Thursfield is an invalid, and no one knows where he has come from, or why Lilian has never mentioned him to anybody, or what her brother has been disguising himself and working as an organ-builder for. Mr. Everard, how interested you look! Do you know anything about it?"

"I used to know something about Captain Thursfield when he was quite a young fellow," answered Mr. Everard, "and his elder brother, who has long been dead, was my greatest friend. But it is only quite lately that I learnt his relationship to Miss Lilian, and that Mr. Miller was his son. He—Mr. Miller, or Thursfield, as we must now call him—told me of it himself a short time ago. I am very glad to hear that his father is at the Tower. I did not know that he was expected to return for two or three years yet."

"Where has he been?" asked Katie, eagerly. "Is it a secret? Of course if it is I must not ask, but I should so like to know, for I am sure there is something extraordinary about him, and that he has not simply just come home from some foreign place."

"I think, Miss Katie," said Mr. Everard, "that I had better say nothing on the subject. I dare say your friend, Miss Lilian, will tell you all in time herself, but until then I must not speak of what I know. I have no doubt that Miss Raymond will make all necessary explanations to her friends in time, and that you will not very long have to restrain your curiosity. But may I ask you, Miss Katie, kindly not to mention the subject to any but friends you can trust? for the secret is a sad one."

"We will say nothing," said Mrs. Stuart, "and will wait patiently for further particulars. But how is it, Mr. Everard, that you have never mentioned your friendship with the Thursfield family—even to Lilian herself?"

"I was not aware that she was the daughter of Captain Thursfield," answered Mr. Everard, "though I suspected a relationship. And noticing that no mention of her father was ever made either by herself or her aunts, I thought it better not to ask any questions."

"Well, it is a nice new excitement for this sleepy old town," said Katie. "I am *most* curious about Lilian's brother. It seems so strange that he should have been working for his living in that organ business, while Lilian and her aunts have lived here with plenty of money and everything they want."

"He has had a very good reason for it, Miss Katie," said Mr. Everard, "and is altogether the best young fellow I know. Is Captain Thursfield seriously ill, do you know?"

"I did not hear that," said Katie. "Mrs. Argyle spoke of him as an invalid. A nice piece of news to tell Constance, isn't it, mamma?—only I think I shall wait till we hear a little more about it. I do think the Pointhaven people are wonderful for having mysteries! Here is even Mr. Everard been keeping a secret ever since the Miss Raymonds and Lilian came to the Tower, not letting one of us know that he had ever heard the name of Thursfield before!"

Mr. Everard smiled. "It is better not to speak of all one knows," he said. "You will find that out when you have lived as long as I have, Miss Katie."

"I will go and see poor Charlie," he said to himself, as he left the Vicarage. "The sight of an old friend's face may do him good. How is it that he is free so much sooner than Arthur expected, I wonder? He feared it

could not be for about three more years. But I am very thankful that the poor young fellow's work is over."

Arthur called at his blind friend's house on his return from London two or three days afterwards, and explained to him the manner in which the debt had been discharged, and begged him to come and see his father as soon as he felt able to do so. He was sure that his ungrateful treatment of his brother's generous friend was one of the chief burdens on his father's mind, and thought it might do him good, and make him happier, to see Mr. Everard at once. He called for him the following morning, and escorted him to the Tower, where the ladies were all hard at work preparing for his own departure for Cambridge a few days later. The Captain still kept his own room; he had left his bed, but was still feeling too ill in body, as well as mind, to be able to bear any fatigue or excitement. Lilian had devoted her days to him during Arthur's absence, and Mr. Auriol's daily visits had quieted his mind a little, but it was perhaps as well that his old blind friend was unable to see the terrible change in his appearance since the time when he had known him, a bright young officer, only *too* carelessly gay and light-hearted.

"Father," said Arthur, "I have brought Mr. Everard to spend an hour or two with you. He was anxious to come, and I thought you would be glad to see an old friend. He will stay and talk with you, while I write some business letters."

"Everard!" exclaimed Captain Thursfield, his face turning a shade paler. "You don't mean to say that you have brought him to see me! I thought he would rather go to the ends of the earth than come near one who has robbed him as I have done! Why do you all come to heap coals of fire on my head? or has he come to take me back again to prison? I deserve it, I know, but—Everard, for my brother's sake you will have mercy on me?"

"Hush, Charlie!" said Mr. Everard, gently; "I have come neither to reproach you for the past, nor to threaten you for the future. I have come because I cannot let my dear old friend's brother, whom he left to my care, be ill and suffering, without trying to comfort him, and do him any good that is in my power. I am blind, Charlie, and cannot see you, but I am not the less your friend for that reason, or the less anxious to help you if I can."

"Blind!" exclaimed Captain Thursfield. "Arthur has told me of your poverty and suffering, which I have caused you, but not of your blindness. How did you become blind? Surely for *that* trial at least I am not to blame?"

"No one is to blame," answered his friend, the beautiful expression of patience shining out in his face. "It was God's hand, and His alone, which took away my sight. I lost it irrecoverably during a sharp attack of fever, shortly after I last corresponded with you."

"And I allowed you to struggle on in your blindness and loneliness, knowing that I must have robbed you of almost every penny you possessed, and never even made one effort to repay you the smallest part of what I borrowed of you!" cried the conscience-stricken man. "You gave me your all, and I hardly so much as thanked you for it. Yet you come now to speak kind words to me, and to give me help in my wretchedness! This is too much!" And throwing himself on his knees before his generous benefactor, he sobbed like a child, piteously imploring forgiveness.

"Don't kneel to me, Charlie," said Mr. Everard, laying his hands affectionately on the unhappy Captain's shoulder. "I long ago forgave you. Kneel before God, and ask His forgiveness for your evil courses. You have sinned, but I thank Him that you are awakened to repentance. It is better that you should suffer this remorse and pain for awhile, than remain in the careless state in which I fear

you have long lived. My revenge, do you say? Do not fear that; my revenge is forgiveness. You have had your punishment from another hand if not from mine; I never had any wish to punish you, my poor fellow. I could not have lifted a finger against my friend's brother. I have wondered sometimes whether I might not have used my influence better with you—whether I really did all I might have done to save you."

"You did all a friend could do," murmured the Captain. "Do not say a word of that, or you will break my heart. You did only too much, and now it is too late to repay you. My health is broken, and I can do nothing—nothing but repent during the short time of life that may be before me. And even repentance, I fear, is too late now!"

"It is never too late in this life," said Mr. Everard, gently, "if it is true repentance. Spend what years of life you may yet be spared to enjoy in atoning for the past, Charlie. Not to me—that account is settled—but in living for others rather than yourself, and in making up by your love and gratitude to your unselfish children for the years of suffering you have caused to them."

"I cannot make it up to them," said the Captain, hopelessly. "Their goodness—my son's noble devotion—is the most bitter drop in my cup of remorse. What is the love and gratitude of such a father as I have been? That cannot repay them."

"It is all the payment they care for," answered his friend; "all they have craved for during these years of toil. Thank God that you have such children, Charlie, to comfort you in your ill-health and weakness."

"You will come again?" said Captain Thursfield, imploringly, as Mr. Everard wished him farewell. "I do not deserve that you should take pity on me, but I have few friends now, and I do not wish to see new faces. Yours has done me good. If you will come again I shall be

grateful. My son will leave me in a day or two, and I dread his going! He is so patient and gentle with me, and bears with me as I fear no one else will. My little Lilian is like him, but I do not know her so well, and it is a constant reproach to me to see her face—so like her mother's!"

"You will feel happier with her by-and-by," said Mr. Everard. "I can understand the painfulness of the recollections which she brings to your mind, but in time I trust they will be less painful to you. I will certainly come again, as soon as I am able. I, too, have not many friends, and we will be companions to each other. There is much that I should like to hear from you, when you are better and able to tell it."

"Not yet," said the Captain, shuddering. "It will be the story of a selfish, heartless life, of which I cannot bear to think."

"Do you wish to go home, Mr. Everard?" asked Arthur, entering at that moment. "I have finished my letters, and am quite ready to accompany you. Father, you must lie down and rest. You are quite exhausted."

"I am," said the Captain, feebly. "I seem to have no strength. Thank you, Arthur, that is comfortable;" and he closed his eyes to sleep.

Arthur and Lilian accompanied their blind friend to his home, and returned by the beach, talking busily and enthusiastically of Arthur's university prospects.

"I feel very old to be beginning my university life," said Arthur, "at an age when so many fellows have got through with it. I shall feel like an overgrown school-boy, learning his A B C!"

"You are not very old yet!" said Lilian, laughing, "though I suppose it will seem strange to go back to books after seven years' 'carpentering,' as Aunt Winifred calls it. It is not as though you had given up books altogether, though, and I believe you will do wonders!"

"I don't know about that," said Arthur, "though I shall certainly not fail for want of encouragement. But I advise you and the aunts to come down a little in your expectations, for I should be sorry to disappoint you."

"You may say the expectations of another person also," said Lilian. "Don't you want to read Hazel's letter? Remember, it was not written for your eyes, though I allow you to see it."

Arthur held out his hand eagerly for the epistle, which he read three times before giving it back.

"She is very kind to speak as she does!" he said, warmly. "I wonder if she will come to Pointhaven at Christmas, Lily?"

"Very likely," said Lilian. "Why, Arthur, you forget she is to be one of my bridesmaids! Of course she will come."

"You never told me that," said Arthur, a sudden light dancing in his eyes. "I suppose you meant it to be a secret, and have let it out unawares."

"I believe I did mean to keep it secret," said Lilian, with a smile; "but perhaps it is as well for you to know at once. Only don't let the thought of Christmas festivities disturb your studies."

The thought certainly caused Arthur to walk the remainder of the way home in a most absent frame of mind, and Lilian, finding at length that it was useless to expect an answer to her remarks, held her tongue, and allowed him to enjoy his pleasant reflections in peace.

Katie Stuart had not to remain long in unsatisfied curiosity about the affairs of her friends at the Tower. Miss Winifred, with her usual straightforwardness, having opened her doors to her brother and nephew, resolved to conceal nothing from her friends, but to tell them openly the cause of her estrangement from Arthur, and of the silence hitherto preserved by her whole household on the

subject of Lilian's father. It would be impossible, she said, to evade the questions, which were sure to be asked, without prevarication, if not direct untruth, and she would have no concealments. The knowledge of the truth would only be to Arthur's honour, and as he had suffered at her hands, he should now receive praise and honour at her hands also. And as for Captain Thursfield, though she heartily forgave him, she would not be put to daily inconvenience about him with her neighbours. If their imagination were left to run wild they would be sure to concoct a story much *worse* than the truth, and she preferred to tell them candidly his history, and leave them to act towards her household as they thought best.

"To poor Charlie himself," she said to Miss Evelyn, "the public opinion of Pointhaven will matter but little. He will never be well enough to mix in society again, and if people are not good-hearted enough to pity him in his repentance, and to visit him in kind feeling, they are not worth thinking about. For myself, I can hold up my head in the face of anybody!"

Miss Winifred's feelings had undergone a slight change since the time when she would rather have sunk into the earth than walked through the streets of Pointhaven by the side of Mr. Miller, the organ-builder, in the character of her acknowledged nephew.

It must be said, to Pointhaven's credit, that its inhabitants behaved, under the circumstances, with much good feeling, and that not a finger was pointed against the much-erring but repentant captain, or an unkind or scornful word spoken of the ladies at the Tower because of their connection with him. And Captain Thursfield's son was nothing less than a hero in their estimation, when it became known how generously he had, when a mere boy, given up home and friends, and bright prospects in life, for the sake of liberating his imprisoned and almost unknown father.



CHAPTER XL.

'I do love nothing in the world as well as you.
Is not that strange?'

—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

SOME excitement was felt among all the young ladies of Pointhaven as Christmas, and the time for Lilian Thursfield's marriage with the Vicar of All Saints', drew near. Lilian was a general favourite with both old and young, and numerous were the presents which flowed in from one friend after another, during the last few days before the wedding. Costly, too, some of them were; but Lilian valued none more than the simple gift of her blind music-master, and the trifles which she received from the poor whom she had visited, and from her devoted Sunday class.

The wedding took place one bright morning in St. Philip's Church, which was crowded to overflowing, nearly every one of Mr. Auriol's parishioners flocking in to witness the ceremony, in addition to the large numbers who attended from Lilian's own parish and St. Mary's. Mr. Roper and Mr. Stuart conducted the service, and Lilian's father gave her away, having entered the church that morning for the first time since his arrival at the Tower. A severe attack of nervous illness had confined him for many weeks to his bed, after his son's departure for

Cambridge, and he had only just recovered sufficiently to be present at the marriage. A glance at his face showed that a great change had taken place in him during his time of illness, and that it was a change for the better. Unhappy he still looked, as well as pale and ill, but his face wore a subdued, quiet expression, very different to that of rollicking carelessness, to which his son had been so long accustomed, and different also to that of hopeless, restless despair, with which he had left him nearly three months before.

Hazel was, as she had promised to be, one of the bridesmaids, and Sir Reginald was among the wedding guests. He had made Arthur's heart throb with happiness and excitement by his warm greeting of him, and by his heartily-spoken words of congratulation and pleasure at the completion of his painful task, and at his new and happy prospects in life. Arthur was touched by the kindness and gentleness with which Sir Reginald treated his father, and grateful for it. He had had some fear that the haughty spirit of the master of Ravenstone would have held him aloof from the discharged prisoner—that, at least, he would only have treated him with cold courtesy; but his own sorrows had made a more sympathetic man of Sir Reginald than he might otherwise have been, and the sight of the pale, unhappy, though still soldierly and gentlemanly captain, had touched both himself and his daughter deeply.

The wedding was a very happy one. The bride's future home was so near to that of her relations, that the parting was much softened to all, and very few tears damped the brightness of the day. Miss Winifred, however, went about the house, after the bride and bridegroom had started off for their wedding-tour, with an expression of unwonted sadness and gloom on her strong-minded countenance, and wiped her eyes a good many times when no one was looking. For though she had sometimes seemed harsh and

unfeeling towards her niece, her devotion to her had been very intense, and it was harder to give her up than might be generally imagined by Miss Raymond's neighbours.

"I *hope* Mr. Auriol will take care of her," she said, despondingly, to Arthur, as she wished him good night; "but I am really doubtful about it. Men are so unreliable—even the best of them! I don't think you will prove so, Arthur, and I have much greater faith in Harry than I ever expected to have; but I am anxious, I confess."

"I don't think you need be, Aunt Winnie," said Arthur, kindly. "He is a good man, and quite as devoted to our Lily as we can wish. Besides, they are not going to live very far off—only half-a-mile away, so if you have any doubts they can easily be set at rest."

"Yes, that is some comfort," said Miss Winifred. "I would never have consented to Lilian's marrying anyone who would have taken her to any great distance—never! So it is fortunate that nobody else asked for her. I cannot help wishing that she had been contented to remain with her Aunt Evelyn and myself, to be the comfort of our old age; however, youth thinks differently. There was a time, Arthur——"

But Miss Winifred sighed, and turned away without concluding her speech—the first reference she had ever made to her own past trouble, either to her niece or nephew.

Arthur went to his room, to dream of Hazel, of the fair vision she had been to him in her bridesmaid's dress, and of the yet fairer vision which he now ventured to hope that she would be some day. He had few opportunities of speaking to her that day, having had to find a voice and ears, if he could not find eyes, for many other guests, who had no idea how little their conversation interested him, or how many of his thoughts were elsewhere.

Sir Reginald had promised to remain all the next day at

the Tower, that Hazel might have the opportunity of visiting her friends at the lighthouse; and as the morning was bright and frosty, Miss Winifred proposed that they should take their walk to Perilpoint directly after breakfast, and enjoy the pleasant winter sunshine while it lasted.

"What are you going to do this morning, Thursfield?" asked Sir Reginald. "Will you walk to the lighthouse with us?"

"I shall be very happy to do so," answered Arthur, with a flush of pleasure at the invitation. "It is some long time since I last saw my kind friends, the Manlinsons."

"A walk will do you good," said Sir Reginald, giving Arthur a keen glance out of his grey eyes. "You are looking pale. I expect you have been overworking at Cambridge."

"That is what I tell him," said Miss Winifred, "and I don't wish him to do it. I am anxious that he should do well, but I have no ambition to see him a senior wrangler, like dear Lilian's husband. His constitution would never stand it, I am convinced. Don't laugh at me, Arthur. I mean what I say."

"My ambition doesn't run in that line, Aunt Winnie," said Arthur. "I shall never be a senior wrangler. I am of a more peaceable disposition."

"What are you ambitious for then?" asked Hazel, in an eager tone. "Are you going in for music? You ought to do that."

"For theology and music," answered Arthur. "Do you like my choice?"

"Yes, I am glad!" she answered, with half shy earnestness, "because you are sure to succeed in both. Will you take a musical degree?"

"I hope so, in time," answered Arthur, with a bright smile of pleasure at her interest in his behalf. "My

ambition goes as far as that. So I have plenty of work before me. What time shall you be ready for Perilpoint, Sir Reginald?"

"I am ready when Hazel is," he answered. "How is your father this morning, Thursfield? I fear yesterday's excitement was too much for him."

"It was," said Arthur; "but I hope a quiet day or two will set him right again. Sir Reginald," he added, as the ladies rose and left the breakfast table, "I am very grateful to you for your kindness to him! He so dreads meeting strangers, and your kindness yesterday made the day a much brighter one than he expected it to be."

"I was grieved to see him looking so ill and wasted," said Sir Reginald. "Don't thank me, my dear fellow. For your sake as well as his own I am glad that it has been in my power to show him any kindness. Forgive my interference—but I take a deep interest in you, Thursfield, and I am anxious to know if all is now clear in your own path. I have thought you looked troubled. Is it only for the loss of your sister, and your father's state of health, or have you still any other cause for anxiety? Tell me frankly, for the sake of the sincere friendship which I shall always feel for one who has acted so nobly as yourself."

Arthur hesitated; then with an effort he said frankly—"I have an anxiety, Sir Reginald, I confess—a personal one—and you are the friend whose help I have not yet dared to ask in the matter. But your kindness gives me courage to tell you candidly what—what I do not know if you are in any way prepared to hear."

"Well?" said Sir Reginald kindly, as Arthur stopped, and looked somewhat agitatedly into his face, as if to read, if possible, whether any encouragement were there.

"Some time ago," said Arthur, "I met someone—a girl—who much interested me. She was not, as I thought, in my own station in life, but I could not shake off the

impression which she left upon me, and the interest I felt in her grew stronger every time I saw her. I could not help feeling that there was some secret connected with her history, and that she was not what she seemed to be; and when I heard that you, Sir Reginald, had claimed her as your own lost daughter, I was not surprised at the news—it only confirmed my own idea—romance, as I called it. During that happy time at Ravenstone a few months ago, I found out that my interest in the lighthouse-keeper's daughter had grown into something much deeper—into something which I then thought could only be to my own misery. For in the position I then held, and expected to hold for years, I felt that my love for Sir Reginald Ravenstone's daughter was hopeless—and yet I could not conquer it. It only grew stronger and deeper every day, until one morning, in desperation, I told her something of the truth.”

“You told her?” said Sir Reginald. “What did she say?”

“I did not ask her for her love,” said Arthur, eagerly. “I did not think it would be fair or right in me to do so. I only said a few words to her, to make her understand how it was with me, and to ask if I might still keep her friendship. And I never breathed a word to her on the subject again. We were friends afterwards, but nothing more. I did not try to win her love, and I tried not to show my own. I could not try not to *feel* it, for that would have been impossible.”

“From what she said to you,” said Sir Reginald, “did you infer that she returned your feeling?” and he looked with a rather anxious, wistful expression at his young companion's face—a good and beautiful face, which, he could not help thinking, any girl might love and be proud of.

“I thought, from what she said,” answered Arthur, flushing, “that if I had been free to ask for her love, she

would not perhaps have refused to give it to me. She did not tell me so, but——”

“I understand,” said Sir Reginald, with a half smile; “and now, what is it I am to do for you?”

“Let me hope!” said Arthur, eagerly. “Let me ask her if she will allow me to work for her, and if in time——”

“I don’t want to part from my daughter,” said Sir Reginald, with a smile that was half sad, half amused, “especially when I have had her to myself such a short time. But when young people take these things into their heads, it isn’t much use to talk or to raise objections. And the truth is, Thursfield, that I believe you have had more of my daughter’s thoughts lately than she would like to tell me of. There is only one bargain which I shall make with you. When you are married you must make Ravenstone your home, and leave me a corner where I can sit and look at my daughter.”

“Then you have no objection?” began Arthur, ecstatically.

“Objection? No,” said Sir Reginald, holding out his hand, “except so far as a father’s natural unwillingness to take a secondary place in his daughter’s affections may be considered an objection. But Hazel must marry some day; and though I confess I have thought that nothing less than a prince could possibly be good enough for her, your noble conduct, Arthur, has made me change my mind. You have my full permission to ask for the love which I feel sure she will give you. And I would give her into no hands more willingly than into yours, because there is no man, young or old, whom I could trust and respect more thoroughly than I trust and respect you.”

Arthur wrung Sir Reginald’s hand with painful warmth and eagerness, and was endeavouring to frame a reply with as much self-command as he could muster, when Hazel opened the door, exclaiming—

"I have been looking for you and Mr. Thursfield everywhere, papa! What have you been discussing all this time? I began to think you had gone off without me, for Miss Raymond declared you were not here."

"Business, my dear, business," said Sir Reginald, quietly. "I have been interfering with Mr. Thursfield's concerns, and endeavouring to set him right upon a little business matter, on which he had not very clear ideas. Young men don't always understand these things very well."

Hazel looked at her father inquiringly, but Sir Reginald's face was impenetrable, and she glanced at Arthur. Something in his face made the colour come into her own, and she turned away her eyes hastily. The ball of conversation was principally kept up by Sir Reginald and his daughter during the walk to Perilpoint. Arthur's conversational powers had apparently deserted him, and he could only watch Hazel, as she walked at her father's side, with dazzled eyes.

The Manlinsons were not much less delighted at the sight of Arthur than of their "daughter," as they still called her, and amused Sir Reginald by the eagerness with which they called up every incident of his visit to them at the time of his accident, reminding him of all he had said or done, in a manner which was slightly embarrassing.

"If you young people want to run about over those dreadful rocks," said Sir Reginald, after a while, "you must go by yourselves. I am tired, and shall be glad of half-an-hour's rest by your comfortable fire, Mrs. Manlinson. Thursfield, you will look after my daughter? I am always afraid when I bring her here that she will fall into the sea, or break her arms and legs, if she doesn't go back to her mermaid ways altogether, and forsake me!"

"I do like coming here so much, papa!" exclaimed Hazel, enthusiastically. "Will you come and help me to

look for treasures then, Mr. Thursfield, or will you stay with papa?"

"I will come with you," said Arthur, with alacrity. "Miss Ravenstone," he added, as they scrambled down to the water's edge together, "you reminded me very much of a mermaid, when I saw you sitting on this rock, almost in the water, one morning when you were singing to yourself."

"Did I?" said Hazel. "I used to wish very much to be a mermaid when I was a little girl. Isn't this beautiful?" And she looked out over the wild expanse of glittering, sunlit water, with sparkling eyes.

"My recollections of this place are very pleasant ones," said Arthur. "That was such a happy time, when I was getting better, and used to be out here all day with Lilian."

"I used to envy you so," said Hazel. "You always looked so happy together, and I used to hide myself some where amongst the rocks, and watch you, and wish I had a brother or a sister to talk to. What will you do without Lilian?"

"I shall miss her," answered Arthur, with a sigh. "The old Tower doesn't feel like the same place without her, and though her own home is so near, that won't quite make up for losing her out of the house. Must you go home to-morrow? Can't you spare us a day or two more? It is hardly worth coming over for such a short visit." And he looked at her with wistful eyes.

"I think papa has arranged to go to-morrow," said Hazel—and Arthur thought she spoke regretfully—"or I should have liked to stay very much. I think your Aunt Winifred is very unhappy at losing Lilian. I should like to stay a little while, and try to comfort her. How she used to dislike me! But she is very good to me now."

"Did she dislike you?" said Arthur, in an indignant tone. "Ah well! it is no use to be angry about poor Aunt Winnie's likes and dislikes. They are always very

strong, and don't often change, but I am glad your case has been one of the few exceptions! She is very good to me now, and I must not find fault with her."

"You have not any more disagreeable business, have you?" asked Hazel, timidly, after a few moments' silence. "I was afraid that perhaps you had, from what papa said just before we came out. I am glad he was able to help you."

She glanced at him, as she spoke, with the wistfully sympathetic look which always haunted him more than any other of the looks which he treasured from that sweet, expressive face; but her eyes fell, as his own met them, full of a dazzling brightness, which made her tremble with a feeling she could not analyse.

"Hazel!" was the only word he said, but he held out his arms, and she never knew how it was that the next moment she was locked in them, sobbing on his breast out of pure intensity of happiness.

"Do you remember what I said to you in the rose garden?" he whispered, finding voice at last, after a long sweet silence. "You did not tell me I must give up all hope, and the thought that, perhaps, you would have given me the love I dared not ask for if I had been able to ask for it, has been my comfort ever since. Would you have given it to me, Hazel? Tell me now!" and he raised her face gently, that he might look into the clear depths of those beautiful eyes, which could never tell anything but the truth.

"Isn't it enough to give it now?" whispered Hazel, her bright flush and smile answering his question clearly enough.

"Not quite," answered Arthur. "I was wondering whether Miss Ravenstone could have cared for a poor organ-builder as much as for——"

"A Cambridge undergraduate?" suggested Hazel, with a smile. "Don't you know, Arthur," she added, with half

timid earnestness, "that nothing ever made me care for you more than that work of yours, which you did so bravely and nobly! I don't think you can think so much of me after all, if you believe this change can make any difference in my caring for you! You know how glad I am that you are going to be a clergyman, but neither that nor anything else can make me——"

"What?" asked Arthur eagerly, and he looked with a half laughing, half reproachful look into her face, which had crimsoned with confusion. "Please finish your sentence!"

"Love you better than I did at Ravenstone," whispered Hazel, covering her face with her hands, for which confession Arthur thanked her silently, with a great throb of happiness in his heart.

"What was your business with papa?" asked Hazel, after another long silence. "You have not told me that yet."

"Just this business that I have been discussing with you," answered Arthur, smiling. "You belong to me by his consent, my darling—with only this stipulation—that I must not take you away from him."

"No, I must not ever leave papa," said Hazel. "He would be very unhappy if I did. You will not mind that, Arthur?"

"I shall never mind anything that is for your happiness or his," said Arthur. "I will not be selfish in my love. Sir Reginald will not take you away to-morrow now, Hazel, will he?"

Hazel shook her head. "I daresay I can persuade him to stay a little longer," she said. "He always does what I ask him. Arthur, what will your Aunt Winifred say to me?"

"She will love you," answered Arthur, triumphantly, though his voice trembled a little. "And my father—Hazel, do you know what you are doing? Do you know

what things you may hear some day—what things *some* people may say to you for marrying a man whose father has been imprisoned?”

“I know it all,” answered Hazel, a beautiful, steadfast light shining in her eyes as she raised them lovingly to his face; “and I do not care for what the world may say. I am proud enough, Arthur, to enjoy bearing a little blame when I know I am right. What have those ‘some’ people to do with you and me?”

“You and me!” How pleasant it sounded from her lips, and how fully they both realised, as they stood there on those lonely rocks, with the great rolling sea before and on each side of them, and no sound but that of the waves to break in upon the still peace of their hearts, that their new-found happiness belonged to them alone, and could never be touched by any rude outside hand—just to themselves and to God, who had given them to each other! The busy world, with its interfering voice and its petty trials, seemed very far away just then, and it was Sir Reginald’s voice which at last aroused the lovers to a recollection of the existence of other human beings besides themselves.

“Do you imagine that it is June, you foolish young people?” he said. “You seem to have very little remembrance of the fact that it is the 3rd of January, and a very frosty morning into the bargain. How long do you think you have kept me waiting?”

“You were tired, papa,” said Hazel, with a smile, as she slipped her hand into his. “We took it for granted that you would like a good long rest.”

“I thought you were going to look for all sorts of curiosities,” said her father. “I don’t see them. Wouldn’t Mr. Thursfield help you to look for them? What has become of all the wonderful things these Perilpoint rocks used to produce?”

"They have produced new treasures to-day, Sir Reginald," said Arthur, holding out his hand, "and we have forgotten to look for the old ones. They have given me your daughter's love, and very great happiness."

"And Hazel?" said her father, drawing her close to him. "What has this old ocean rolled to my little daughter's feet to-day?"

But what it had brought to Hazel was only seen in the shining dark eyes, which, full of happy tears, were quietly hidden, after a glance at her lover, on her father's breast. But their answer was enough, and kissing his daughter's forehead, he placed her hand in Arthur's, and gave them his low-spoken blessing.





CHAPTER XLI.

"He is the half part of a blessed man,
Left to be finished by such as she ;
And she a fair divided excellence,
Whose fulness of perfection lies in him."

—*King John.*

IT was the second week in April, and the soft spring air in the green lanes around Ravenstone was laden with the sweet breath of the primroses and violets, which peeped out from their green beds under the hedges, tempting the young mistress of Ravenstone to many a long ramble, as one fresh flower after another decoyed her further and further from home, sometimes alone, often in company with her father, from whose side she was seldom long absent. Very bright those early spring days were to Hazel, and whether she was wandering in the shady lanes, or dreaming at home over her organ, there was generally a happy smile flickering about her mouth, showing that her thoughts were pleasant ones. For next week was Easter week, and on Saturday Arthur was coming to spend the last fortnight of his Easter vacation at Ravenstone. He was now with his father and aunt at a warm seaside town, to which Captain Thursfield had been ordered for change of air at the beginning of the year, as the air of Pointhaven had been pronounced too cold for him during the early spring

months. He was to come to Ravenstone with his son, for it was a warm place, and Sir Reginald had thought the change would do him good. He had never recovered from the severe illness which had come on shortly after his arrival at the Tower, and his children knew that he would never be well again. But they were thankful for the increasing peace of mind which was given him—that the terrible fits of alternate depression and childish querulousness, which had been so painful to bear, now seldom came upon him. Lilian had been to see him occasionally since he had been ordered away from Pointhaven, with her Aunt Evelyn for her chaperone, as Mr. Auriol could not easily leave his large and poor parish. She had not liked to leave him entirely to Miss Raymond's tender mercies, for though no one could be a better nurse, Lilian knew that her father held this strong-minded sister-in-law rather in awe, and that her own visits, short though they were, were cheering to him.

Her own life was an intensely, though quietly happy one, and she entered as heartily as her strength would allow into her husband's parish work and interests, helping him more than she was herself aware, by her gentle influence among the rough classes with whom he had to deal. As time went on, and Miss Winifred found that Mr. Auriol showed no disposition to forget or neglect his young wife, and no objection to her receiving her own advice upon many points on which she insisted that her niece must be ignorant, she gradually lost her fear that the gilt would wear off in time, and show Mr. Auriol to be no better than the rest of mankind, and came to regard Lilian's loss with more equanimity. She returned home on Easter Eve, very thankful to be again within her own well-ordered precincts; and on the same day Captain Thursfield and Arthur travelled to Ravenstone.

Arthur thought Hazel had never looked lovelier than

when she came out to welcome him and his father, in her simply-made dress of dark blue velvet, with its soft white swan's-down trimmings, set off by the pale yellow primroses which she wore at her throat and in her hair; and he had never loved her better than when she welcomed his father with a wistful earnestness, and yet brightness of manner, which almost brought the tears to the Captain's eyes. She seemed to know by instinct how to put him at his ease and make him happy, and Arthur blessed her for it; for Captain Thursfield's painful nervousness during the last few months contrasted so strongly with his former dashing, careless ways, that he could never watch him in the society of others without feeling a shock at the change.

"How good you are to my father, Hazel!" he said, as he followed her to the library, after dinner, for some music, leaving Sir Reginald and the Captain together. "It is such a comfort to me to see him look bright and happy!"

"Ought not I to be good to anybody belonging to you?" said Hazel, as she opened her organ, and gently pushed him towards it. "I like to make people happy; don't you? And your poor father looked so sad when he came in!"

"I think it was the sight of your beautiful home that made him sad," said Arthur. "It makes him think of what he might have had. But I think you have a special talent for making people happy, Hazel! I remember that I had been indulging in all sorts of gloomy feelings that evening last June, when you found me leaning against the Park rails, and I had not taken many steps round the Park with you before I felt an intoxicating bliss stealing over me! I thought it was something in the atmosphere of Ravenstone that was exhilarating, but——"

"I know what you are going to say," said Hazel, laying her hand on his mouth, and turning away her own sparkling face, "and you shall not say it. You shall play

to me instead. I have been dreaming of your playing for days."

"I shall say it another time then," said Arthur, wilfully, as he imprisoned the little hand and kissed it. "But I will thank you now for your kindness to my poor father, if you will not let me say anything else."

"Is he better?" asked Hazel. "He looks so ill and weak. I don't think he looks stronger than he did at Christmas-time."

"He will never be better," said Arthur, sadly. "The doctors have told me so. He will get weaker and weaker; they cannot cure him. Hazel! if he had lived differently, he might now have been well and strong, and had a happy, useful life still before him. It is so dreadful to think of his wasted life, and of the sorrow it caused our poor mother—her death-sorrow. It is hard to forgive him that. How little Lilian and I knew what her troubles were, and of the life our poor father was leading in India, when we wondered, as little children, why she always cried over his letters, and never cared to talk to us about him, when we teased her with our childish questions."

He covered his face with his hands, and sighed heavily.

"You must not think of those past troubles, Arthur," said Hazel, touching his fair wavy locks caressingly. "Think how glad your mother will be when she sees him again, to know that it was her own son who saved him! I wonder sometimes if she knows what you have done, my darling?"

And she gently drew away his hands, and looked proudly into his face.

"Only my duty," said Arthur, in a low voice; "don't praise me for that, Hazel. You think too much of that work of mine. Don't you know I enjoyed it?"

"I know," said Hazel, "but you suffered because of it too, much more than you let anybody know. I wish

I had been your Aunt Winifred, and *I* would have helped you."

"All things considered, I'm glad you were not, though!" said Arthur. "I never expected that she would open her doors to my father, even if she forgave me. I thought she would do *that* in time, but that was all I hoped for. Aunt Winifred's bark is worse than her bite. She is really good and kind at heart, and I always pity her, for she was very cruelly treated years ago by the man to whom she was engaged. Aunt Evelyn told me so, and so I have always made excuses for her odd ways. What has become of your songs, Hazel—the songs you used to sing when you were a mermaid? Can they only be sung at Perilpoint?"

"I sing them now sometimes," said Hazel. "I will sing them to you by-and-by, when you have played to me. The organ makes the accompaniments now instead of the sea. But I did not know you had heard those songs."

"You didn't think we could see you when you hid yourself in the rocks," said Arthur, laughing. "We could, though, or if we couldn't see you, we could hear you sing, and we used to listen when you did not see us. Shall we go to Perilpoint for our honeymoon, Hazel?"

But though Hazel's eyes sparkled she would not discuss that question yet, on the ground that it was too soon for such plans to be made, and that she could not listen to Arthur's music if he talked so much. And the music went on uninterruptedly for the rest of the evening. Hazel sang her own wild songs, and Arthur made wonderfully beautiful accompaniments to them on the little organ, out of which he drew such sounds as Hazel thought she had never heard except from his fingers. Every night they shut themselves up in the library for their "organ-talks," as they called them, and sometimes Sir Reginald and the Captain came and listened for a little while, and went away again, smiling at the rapt faces which they left behind them.

That fortnight of Arthur's vacation passed only too rapidly, and he returned to Pointhaven with his father, on his way back to Cambridge, with a deeper realisation than ever of the enchantments of Ravenstone Park. He had deeper cause for happiness, too, than he had at all anticipated, for instead of the long engagement, which he supposed must content him until his college course and ordination were over, it had been arranged, with Sir Reginald's consent and entire approval, that the marriage should take place during the summer vacation without any further waiting, and that Cambridge should be Hazel's home for the first two years of her married life. How this had come about Arthur had no very clear idea. Whether he had dared to make the suggestion himself, emboldened by his Aunt Winifred's declamations against long engagements, and by the fact that the allowance she gave him yearly was twice as much as he needed for his own wants, or whether Sir Reginald himself had not drawn him into it by hints of his own that it would conduce to the happiness of all parties that the long waiting should be shortened, he did not feel at all certain. He only knew that Hazel's consent had not been hard to obtain, and that she was looking forward to sharing his Cambridge home with intense interest. Nothing, she thought, could be more delightful than to spend two or three years with him there, entering into all his work as it was impossible to do at a distance, and becoming initiated into all the charms and interests of university life. Of course her father would share their home, and with Ravenstone for their holiday resort, nothing could be more pleasant in prospect. And Sir Reginald's plans went further than this. The living of Ravenstone was in his gift, and he intended to give it to Arthur as soon as it became vacant, which it would in all probability become in a very few years. The rector was old, and had already talked of resigning, but had been

prevailed upon by his people to remain with them as long as he was able to discharge his duties. However, this could not be for long, and Sir Reginald had made up his mind that when his resignation really took place the living should be Arthur Thursfield's. Neither Arthur nor Hazel could raise any objection to this projected arrangement, except that Arthur feared it would be too easy and luxurious a post, and would not give him so much work as he would be glad to do. However, plenty of hard work for the present lay before him, and as two years and a-half must yet pass before his ordination, he resolved to devote all his energies to his present work, and leave the future to find its own.

It was difficult to settle down to steady work after that Easter vacation, with the thought of Hazel, so soon to become his wife and share his Cambridge home and interests, constantly before him, and coming unbidden between him and his books. But he was too well accustomed to self-discipline to allow such thoughts to gain the mastery, and by applying himself with double zeal to the work which he always felt he was doing for her as much as for himself, he succeeded in banishing them, except at stated intervals, when he felt entitled to enjoy the luxury of pleasant thoughts with a clear conscience. It was pleasant in those free moments to know that there was one at that same time thinking of him—busy in her own beautiful home with thoughts like his own, and as supremely happy in the bright prospects before them both as he was himself.

"So you're goin' to get married, lassie?" said the lighthouse-keeper, one May afternoon, when Hazel, who was spending a few days with Lilian, had come to visit her old home. "Well, if there be anybody fit to be your husband, I believe it's him you've chosen. Mother an' I we both took a powerful fancy to young Mr. Thursfield from the minute we set eyes on him; didn't we, wife?"

"Ay, that we did," replied Mrs. Manlinson. "I always did say, if ever there *was* a gentleman, it were Mr. Thursfield, in spite of Kitty Jones."

"What did Kitty Jones say?" asked Hazel, laughing.

"She said if I'd seen Mr. Miller, as she called him, as she'd seen him, comin' out of church all covered with dust from top to toe, I wouldn't talk about *him* bein' a gentleman!" answered Mrs. Manlinson, in a tone of strong indignation; "an' I told her, Hazel, if she hadn't been Kitty Jones, I'd have taken her by the shoulders an' given her a shakin'. I did give her a bit of my mind, for I told her she didn't know a gentleman from a chimney-sweep, as far as I could see, an' so she'd best hold her tongue. For, 'Kitty Jones,' says I, 'dust don't alter a born gentleman, and eyes that can't see more than what's on top ain't much good.' But there, don't you mind what that silly woman said, Hazel, my lass, for she's but a common woman, and ain't never seen much of gentlefolk, for all she's a friend of mine."

"I don't mind what anybody says, mother dear," said Hazel, with a radiant face; "but I'm glad you could always see through the dust! I am proud of his work, you know."

"An' well ye may be, my child," said Manlinson. "'Tis a fine thing he's done, an' what there ain't many as would have done for a father they'd scarce seen. Well, there, we knows how happy you'll be, lassie, so it ain't much good wishin' you this an' that; but if there ever *was* to be a thing as mother an' I could do for you an' him, to keep any sort of trouble off ye, you wouldn't forget us, would ye, my bairn? You'd let the old father an' mother do anything they could for you?"

"Yes, dear father," said Hazel, affectionately; "we shall never forget you—either of you—and we shall always feel that this is another home, where we shall be welcome at

any time. I think we shall come here very often ; we are both so fond of our dear old rocks."

"But it's a long way off from where you'll be livin' for a-while, ain't it?" asked Mrs. Manlinson—"where Mr. Thursfield is now, I mean? Shall you like bein' up there? Seems to me they might as well give him a church, an' let him settle down at once—such a nice, good young man as he is!"

Hazel explained that this was not quite possible, and endeavoured to make them understand, as well as she could, what Arthur was doing at Cambridge, and why he could not at once "settle down" in a parish of his own. She was doubtful whether they understood much about the matter after all ; however, they appeared satisfied, and remarked that they "supposed it was all right, only it did seem a pity to spend so much time right away from Ravenstone, just for the sake of book-learning, especially for a young gentleman who seemed to know most about everything already." Which compliment Hazel stowed away in her memory, among sundry others of the same kind, to repeat to Arthur some day, for their mutual amusement and edification.

She stayed at the lighthouse till it grew dusk, and the lamps were lighted, and then Manlinson took her across the bay in her own old boat, which she rowed herself, just like old times, and left her on the beach in the care of Mr Auriol and Lilian, who had been strolling on the beach enjoying the evening air as they waited for her return.





CHAPTER XLII.

"God, the best maker of all marriages,
Combine your *hearts* in one."

—Henry V.

"My crown is in my heart, not on my head ;
Not decked with diamonds and Indian stones,
Not to be seen ; my crown is called content."

—Henry VI.

I WONDER who is the next person who will be foolish enough to marry!" remarked Miss Raymoud, one July evening, a few days previous to her nephew's wedding-day.

"I am sure the pleasure of these undertakings cannot equal the trouble and expense of getting them up. Sir Reginald is no doubt spending a fortune upon the arrangements for his daughter's wedding, and I don't know when I shall recover from this gadding about in Cambridge! I'm sure I hope Hazel will be pleased with her home. Sir Reginald says so, and you say so, Arthur, but men don't know anything about household arrangements, and I don't know what sort of place she will expect after Ravenstone."

"Why, Aunt Winifred," said Arthur, "I am quite sure you enjoyed furnishing the house quite as much as I did myself, and were quite in your element while you were taking the burden of my arrangements on to your own shoulders! Besides, you know you have decidedly

encouraged this 'undertaking,' as you call it. I don't think I should have been 'foolish enough to marry' till after my ordination, if you had not put the idea into my head! At any rate, I have you to thank for the means of carrying it out."

And he took her hand affectionately.

"Young people always let their ideas run away with them," said Miss Winifred. "Don't you think I could see that in your case, Arthur, as soon as I referred to a possibility of your marriage taking place earlier than you had imagined likely? However, I don't blame you. If people *must* marry, I think they had better get it over quickly. I reckon that a long engagement is just so much waste of time. You spend your time in dreaming and moon-gazing, and can settle to nothing. I had frequently to remind Lillian of little things, which she had never thought of leaving undone before her engagement, and I observe that you are perpetually dreaming, Arthur. Now, when you are married and settled down, whether comfortably or uncomfortably, you can at least give your mind to your ordinary occupations. You laugh, Arthur, but you may depend I am right."

"I am quite disposed to think so," said Arthur, seriously. "I believe I shall work all the better for having my wife to help and encourage me, and I confess that I have found it difficult to keep my thoughts always in the right place since Easter."

"Since before Easter," said Miss Winifred, with a decisive nod. "Since before Christmas, you mean, my dear boy. I shall never forget the day before Lillian's wedding, when Hazel and her father were expected—the absurdly random answers you gave to all my questions, and the mistakes you made in delivering the simplest messages. Where your thoughts were was but too evident; I assure you, Arthur, that by keeping them always in the right

place, you save a world of trouble both to yourself and others. You tried my patience severely that day, and I don't know how many of my arrangements you overturned, by your absence of mind, and inability to attend to what was said to you."

"I am very sorry, Aunt Winnie," said Arthur, laughing.

"What you will do on your wedding-day, I cannot imagine," continued Miss Raymond. "I feel thankful that I shall be at hand to look after you. Hazel will, I really believe, make you a charming wife, Arthur. The little note I received from her this morning delighted me. I confess that I used to have prejudices against her, very strong ones, but her devotion to you has gone far to remove them, and I am well satisfied with your choice."

Arthur's eyes sparkled, but not feeling able to expatiate upon the extent of his own satisfaction, he only wrung his aunt's hand, and went away to join his father and Lilian in the garden.

Three days later a large party assembled at Ravenstone Park, and very early next morning the church bells rang out joyfully to announce the wedding-day of Sir Reginald's beautiful daughter. The road from the Park gates to the church had been strewn with flowers from every garden in the village, and crowds of eager faces watched the arrival of the bridal party, and shone with pleasure at the sight of the young mistress of Ravenstone in her white robes, as she entered the church, leaning on her proud father's arm. And crowds again assembled at the Park gates two or three hours later, to wait for the carriage which conveyed the bride and bridegroom to the station, and hearty cheers and innumerable bouquets followed it till it had rolled quite out of sight and hearing of the enthusiastic villagers.

"Taint the last sight of her sweet face though, blessings on it!" said an old man to his next neighbour, turning

homewards as the carriage wheels disappeared round a corner. "She'll be here again come Christmas, and maybe for a bit afore that, when the honeymoon's over. Mrs. Grey at the Lodge, she told me so. We shan't lose her, for all she's got married."

"It'll be a good day when she comes back, sure enough," said the neighbour, fervently. "It were a good day for us when Miss Hazel first come to the Park, that it were, and there ain't one on us that'll forget her sweet face in a hurry. I'm right glad she's got such a noble-lookin' young gentleman for her husband. Folks said he warn't so handsome as young Lord Stanley, over at Fairdale, as was said to be lookin' after Miss Hazel, but I likes the look of this one best myself, and I think she's got the right one. There's a somethin' in his face as there ain't in Lord Stanley's, for all he's got a handle to his name. I don't know what it is, but I likes it uncommon."

"Ay," said the former speaker, "and he's mighty proud of Miss Hazel, and she of him—anybody can see that. And that's the main thing, in my opinion, as I says to my old woman. There's folks as can jog through the world together, and think precious little of one another as they goes along; but I don't hold with that, for it ain't Bible doctrine, and I'm glad Miss Hazel ain't follerin' *them* ways."

And the old man trudged home contentedly, to sit in the chimney-corner with his own faithful old partner, with whom he had lived just sixty years, and to dream with her of Miss Hazel's return home, as the pleasantest event to which they could look forward in their uneventful lives.

Hazel and Arthur spent a month in Switzerland, and came back on the last day of August, to finish up their honeymoon, as Arthur had suggested, at Perilpoint Lighthouse, where the Manlinsons had made great preparations

for their reception, and where they revelled in lonely rambles on the rocks and moonlight excursions on the water, to their heart's content, undisturbed by any human beings besides themselves.

"I think I have enjoyed this last week as much as any of our time in Switzerland," said Hazel to her husband, as they sat together at the water's edge, on the eve of their return to Ravenstone, and watched the setting sun dip slowly into the golden waves on the horizon.

"So have I," said Arthur. "I could not give up my fancy for spending just a little bit of our time here. I don't wonder you loved this home, Hazel, and I don't wonder that, living here, you grew up like——"

"Like what?" asked Hazel, as he stopped and looked at her with shining eyes. "Such a strange creature, do you mean? For that is what I was called, you know, when it was not anything worse!"

"That is not what I was going to say," said Arthur; "I was only at a loss for words to express just what I mean. But I don't know that I did not think you a 'strange creature,' too, until I discovered my own way of accounting for the strangeness."

"And did that satisfy you?" asked Hazel, with a look of interest.

"Not so entirely as I fancied, I suppose," answered Arthur, smiling, "since I certainly was *not* satisfied until a year ago. But it gave me an excuse for thinking of you, and taking an interest in you, which would have scandalised Aunt Winifred!"

Hazel looked at him rather wistfully.

"Did you really think about me then?" she said. "How happy I should have been if I had known it! I used to think of you, and wish that I was a young lady like Lilian, so that I could be your friend. For I always fancied you would be kind to me, and not be angry with me for my

queer thoughts and fancies. I used to feel as if you would understand them."

"As I flatter myself I really did, better than anyone else," said Arthur, tenderly, "unless it was Mr. Everard. I sometimes wonder if you can be the same Hazel whom I found trying the organ at St. Mary's, and of whom I thought for days afterwards, wondering from where you had got your love of music, and such——"

"Such what?" she asked.

"Such wonderful eyes," he said, looking into them with a smile which was half reverential in its expression. "I often wonder what your eyes are like, and can never arrive at any conclusion."

"An idle speculation," said Hazel, blushing. "I'm glad you don't find out! Won't it be nice to be back at Ravenstone? And our Cambridge home, Arthur! I am so looking forward to my university life!"

"I hope you will find it as pleasant as you imagine," said Arthur. "I fear sometimes it will be lonely for you. I shall be so busy, and have so little time to give to you."

"I am not to hinder you in your work," said Hazel, "and I will not grumble. I shall work too. Think how many years of work I have to make up! I shall imagine myself an undergraduate too. Then, you know, there will be papa, who must often come and stay with us, though he says he will not live with us in Cambridge. He will be lonely at Ravenstone by himself."

"I think he is very good to give you to me at all," said Arthur. "I don't believe I would have given you to anybody if you had been my daughter! Hazel, I do wish I could find out who it was that paid that money for my father! Think, if that had not been paid, I should still have been working on in London, with no hope for years to come of anything more than the 'friendship' with you that we agreed upon in the rose garden!"

Hazel shuddered as she clung closer to him.

"When I think of the unexpected happiness God gave to me through that unknown friend," continued Arthur, "I long to know who the friend is, that I may thank him, and tell him what happiness his kindness has brought me. That dark time, Hazel, when I knew that you cared at least a little for me, and yet that I dared not—must not confess half my own love—I can't bear to think of it! And ever since the hope came which has at last been realised, I have longed to know by whose hand it came. It is a vain longing, I fear, for I have not the least clue."

"Not the very least?" asked Hazel, with a sparkle in her eyes, as she laid her hands on his shoulders, and looked into his face. "What will you give me if I tell you who your friend is?"

"*You* tell me?" exclaimed Arthur. "Hazel, you don't mean—you can't mean——"

He stopped and looked at her eagerly, trying to read her face.

"I mean that somebody thought a great deal better of you than you ever imagined," said Hazel, smiling. "I don't believe you gave him credit for half as much interest in his guest as he really felt. I am half afraid to tell you, because you are so proud! But I will tell, because I want you to know how much he thought of you even then. It was papa, Arthur."

"I am glad I did not know before!" said Arthur, drawing a long breath, "or I should not have dared to ask him for you too! I only wish I could have known, just that I might have thanked him sooner. I did not for a moment think of your father, Hazel, just because it was impossible to me to imagine that he could show such kindness to one of whom he knew so little as myself. I had no claim upon his kindness, and I little thought, when he

questioned me and encouraged me to tell him all I could about the debt, what his motive was. My darling, I am glad we are going home to-morrow, so that I can get rid of this burden of gratitude at once!"

"It isn't to be a burden," said Hazel. "Papa did not wish you ever to know anything about it; but I coaxed him to let me tell you some day, if you were very anxious to find out. It was quite easy to him to do it, dear Arthur, and he was so glad to help you. So don't say any more about it. I only wanted to tell you, to show you papa's good opinion of you," she added, laughing.

Arthur folded her closely in his arms.

"Are you sure nobody else's good opinion had anything to do with it?" he asked, with a smile.

"Quite!" answered Hazel, decisively. "It was entirely papa's own suggestion. Of course he was encouraged to carry it out; that was to be expected."

"I never expected anything of the kind," said Arthur, dreamily, as if he could not yet quite realise it. "It wasn't only kindness to me, Hazel—but to one of whom I thought you and your father could only think with repugnance. How could I expect Sir Reginald to feel any interest in my poor father?"

"You are not to tell your father," said Hazel, earnestly. "Promise me that you will not. Papa would not wish it, and it would do him no good to know. He has been so distressed about what you and Mr. Everard have done for him, and it would only trouble him. And after all it was a very little thing to do for a friend," she added, with a smile. "I think it is very pleasant to be able to help people out of troubles. You and I will have plenty of that work to do, Arthur. How glad I am that you are going to be a clergyman!"

And many were the plans of future usefulness which the young husband and wife made together, during the happy

month spent at Ravenstone Park, before the October term called them to their Cambridge home.

One of Hazel's most cherished plans she kept to herself, until the evening before she and her husband left Ravenstone. It concerned Mr. Everard, who had been spending a few days at the Park, and whose increasing feebleness had been noticed by Hazel as well as by Sir Reginald and Arthur, with much concern. He had returned that morning to Pointhaven, escorted by Arthur, and as Hazel and her father were walking towards the station in the evening, to meet the latter on his return, Hazel disclosed her plan.

"You have more money than you want, have you not, papa?" she began. "I know you have, for you have told me so, and I am going to tell you of something you can do with it."

"Well?" said Sir Reginald, smiling at her eager face. "I know you think it a duty not to let me waste my spare cash! What am I to do with it this time?"

"Buy a new organ for Ravenstone church," said Hazel. "I hope you consider that a good object? It is very much wanted, for the old one is completely worn out. I don't want you to do it now, directly, but I think you had better before very long, and then ——"

"Ah, I see what you are drifting at!" said Sir Reginald. "You want me to give the management of this fine new organ to your old friend, Mr. Everard. Isn't that it?"

"What a capital guess!" said Hazel, laughing. "Yes, I want him to come and end his days here in peace, papa. You must give him a very good salary, and he shall lodge in that pretty little house close to the church, with old Widow Potter, who will enjoy looking after him and making him comfortable. He is beginning to look very old and feeble, and I think the easy work he would have here would suit him better than his work at St. Mary's. He told me that the management of that large

choir was almost too much for him, and that he did not feel strong enough to give the organ recitals, as he used to do. And I think if he had a beautiful organ here he would be perfectly happy, and would like to live in this quiet, peaceful place, better than anywhere else. We would go and see him and make him happy, and get people to be kind to him. Don't you like my plan, papa?"

"Oh, very much," answered Sir Reginald. "I will think it over, and we will talk to Arthur about it this evening. I suppose you have told him already, and that you have been plotting together against my purse?"

Hazel shook her head. "No, he doesn't know anything about it," she said. "I thought I would find out if you approved of my plan before I said anything to him. He will be glad too, for if he is to be rector of Ravenstone by and by, he will want a respectable organ in his church."

"I suppose so," said Sir Reginald. "And the present rector might not object to it. So the thing is to be done, is it? And when the organ is ready, how am I to get possession of my friend Stuart's organist?"

"He will easily find another," said Hazel; "and he will be glad for Mr. Everard to have a happy home like what we will make for him, to end his days in. I don't think he will make any difficulties. You must get one of Woodward's organs, papa, for Arthur says they are especially good."

"I expect you and he will ruin me between you," said Sir Reginald. "You will expect me to find new organs for all the churches in the county by degrees, and to establish funds for the comfortable maintenance of all the organists in the kingdom! Well, I will begin with my own parish, and see what wonders I can effect by the time Mr. Thursfield is in possession."

"Thank you, papa!" said Hazel, earnestly; "you are very good."

And with great delight she told Arthur half-an-hour later of her scheme, and her father's promise to carry it out if possible. Sir Reginald had a consultation with Arthur on the subject, and finding him equally eager with Hazel, both for the new organ and for his blind friend's comfort, promised to see Mr. Stuart and Mr. Everard as soon as possible, and suggest the idea to them.

The next evening found Arthur and his wife installed in their Cambridge home, with which Hazel was quite as delighted as Miss Winifred could desire. The two years and a-half which they spent in that home were very happy as well as very busy ones, and great was Hazel's triumph in the honours won by her husband at the close of his university career—honours which, he declared, had been more than half gained by the help of the bright face which had always welcomed him at home, and the sympathy and encouragement which had never failed to spur him on, when his work had been in danger of flagging. Hazel was especially delighted when he obtained the musical degree, for which he had been diligently working, and it was with a joyful and thankful heart that she witnessed his ordination, a short time after he left the university, and thought of the years of patient toil and self-denial which were at last rewarded by this realisation of his earliest wishes.

Arthur was curate of Ravenstone for a year, and after taking priest's orders, succeeded to the living on the resignation of the aged and infirm rector. Plenty of work came to his hands, for a large and much-neglected hamlet, belonging to another parish, was placed under his charge, by a mutual arrangement with the clergyman to whom it really belonged, who, in delicate health, and with more work than he knew how to get through, was very glad to turn it over to the willing hands of the young rector of Ravenstone.

The new organ had been ready, and Mr. Everard

installed in his pretty cottage, about a year before Arthur's ordination, and Hazel thought, when she and her husband came home to enter upon their parish work, that the bright, happy face, which her blind friend wore, bore sufficient witness to the success of her scheme. That first year of their life at Ravenstone was shadowed by the death of Captain Thursfield, who had been gradually growing weaker and weaker ever since his illness on first arriving at the Tower. His children were constantly at his side during the last few days of his life, which were bright and peaceful, and free from much suffering. He died with their hands in his, blessing them as the means by which God had brought him at last to give up his evil courses, and had led him to repentance. And with their sorrow was mingled deep joy and thankfulness for the bright light which came at the eventide of that dark, wasted life.

Miss Winifred and Miss Evelyn lived on at the Tower, happy in being so near to both their "children," as they called them. Miss Winifred never cleared out the "Jungle," though often urged to do so. It should remain, she said, in stern self-punishment, as a reminder to her of the years of sorrow which her prejudice and unforgiving temper had caused to the nephew and niece whom she dearly loved, and as a reproach to her for having so long and cruelly misjudged one who had proved himself to be the "noblest of men."

"Do not make excuses, Evelyn," she would say to her sister, who was sometimes distressed at her continual self-reproach. "I shall never cease to blame myself for my conduct to that poor boy. Do not ask me to do so. My only comfort is in self-blame."

And it was said in the Tower kitchen that "Missis was grown a wonderful deal more gentle lately," and for this reason her obstinacy with regard to the ghost's favourite haunt was forgiven by her domestics, and the ghost died a

natural death. But that there *had* been a ghost was a fact cook would never give up, let others laugh as they would. She maintained her right to believe what she pleased, supporting herself in this doctrine against all disputants by the asseveration that "Missis had always done the same, and never gave up *her* opinions for nobody."

The old lighthouse continued to defy as bravely as ever the roaring winds and waves which battled round it, and Arthur and Hazel never went to Pointhaven without visiting their favourite spot, and the dear old friends who still occupied it. Their little children learnt to love the "tall house," in which their mother had lived, and the rocks and the little pools in which she had played all alone when she was a child, and they were never tired of hearing about the coloured water and the wonderful things that were to be seen, and the beautiful sea-music which was to be heard, at Perilpoint Lighthouse. And they were never tired of wondering about the "beautiful thing" which their father told them *he* had found there one day, and which they might find somewhere in their own house if they looked in the right place for it. They could not think why he always laughed when he told them about it, and why their mother and grandfather laughed too, and why their mother always looked so pleased about it, and had such bright eyes when it was talked of. The last suggestion they made as to its nature was, that it was a mermaid, though to be sure they could not imagine what part of the house it could be kept in. But their father told them that was certainly the nearest guess at the truth which they would be likely to make till they were bigger. And with that they were obliged to be satisfied, till they were old enough to find out what it was, that was in their father's estimation the "most beautiful thing in the world."

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